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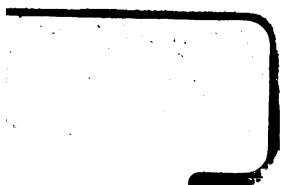
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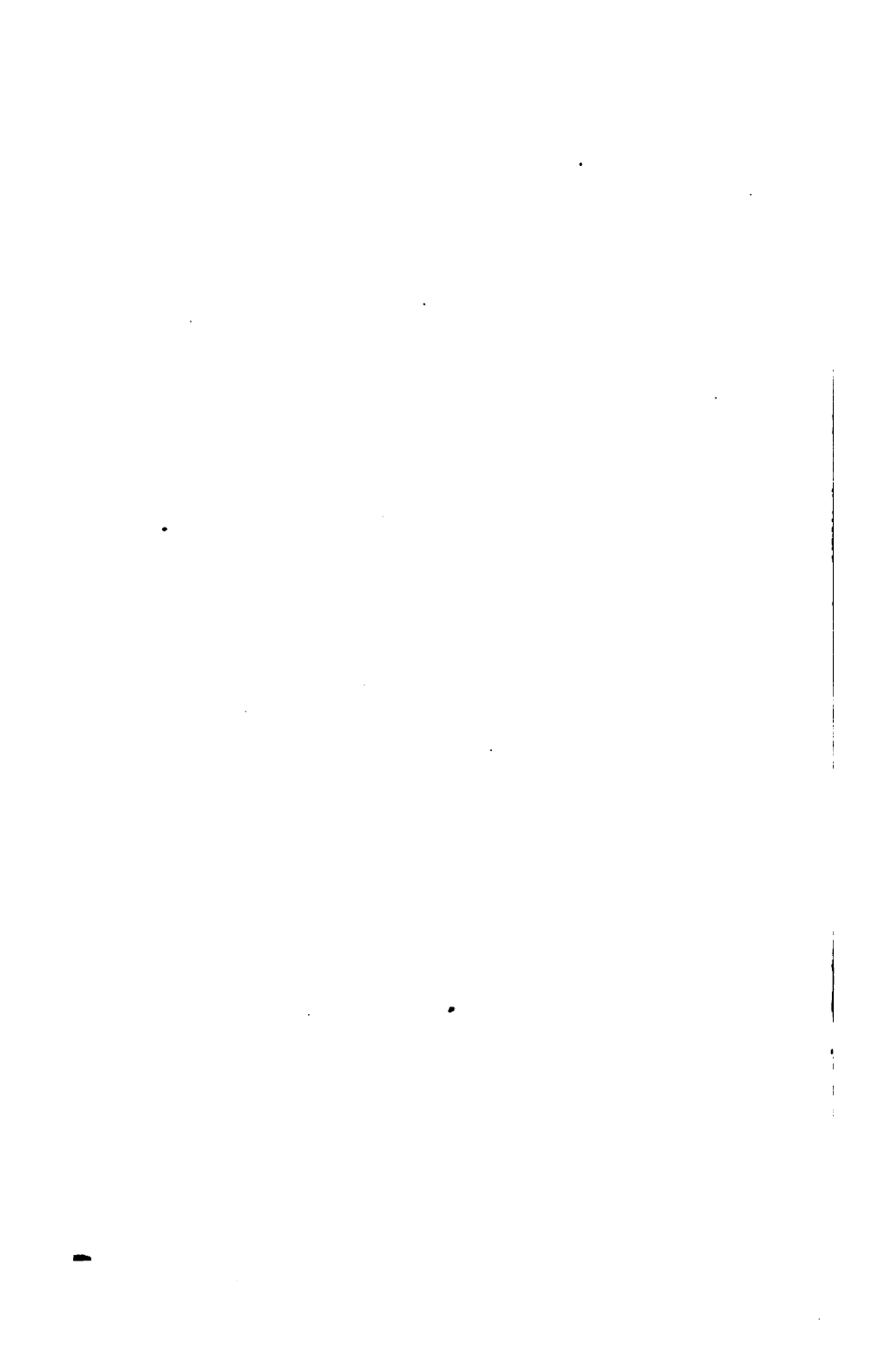
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BONNE AT ST POL DE LÉON

HOW WE SPENT THE AUTUMN ;

OR,

WANDERINGS IN BRITTANY.

BY THE AUTHORESSES OF

"THE TIMELY RETREAT."

[Dunlop, Madeline Anne Wallace-]



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P R E F A C E.

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THERE have been many works, both ancient and modern, written on Brittany, but the ancient books are in old French, difficult to read, and the modern ones are nearly all walking tours by gentlemen, which, though pleasant to read about, are impossible, at least for ladies, to imitate. It is to give those of our own sex who may wish to wander through Brittany, some idea of the objects best worth seeing and the easiest way to visit them all, that we have compiled these pages, and with this view have striven to make them as correct and comprehensive as

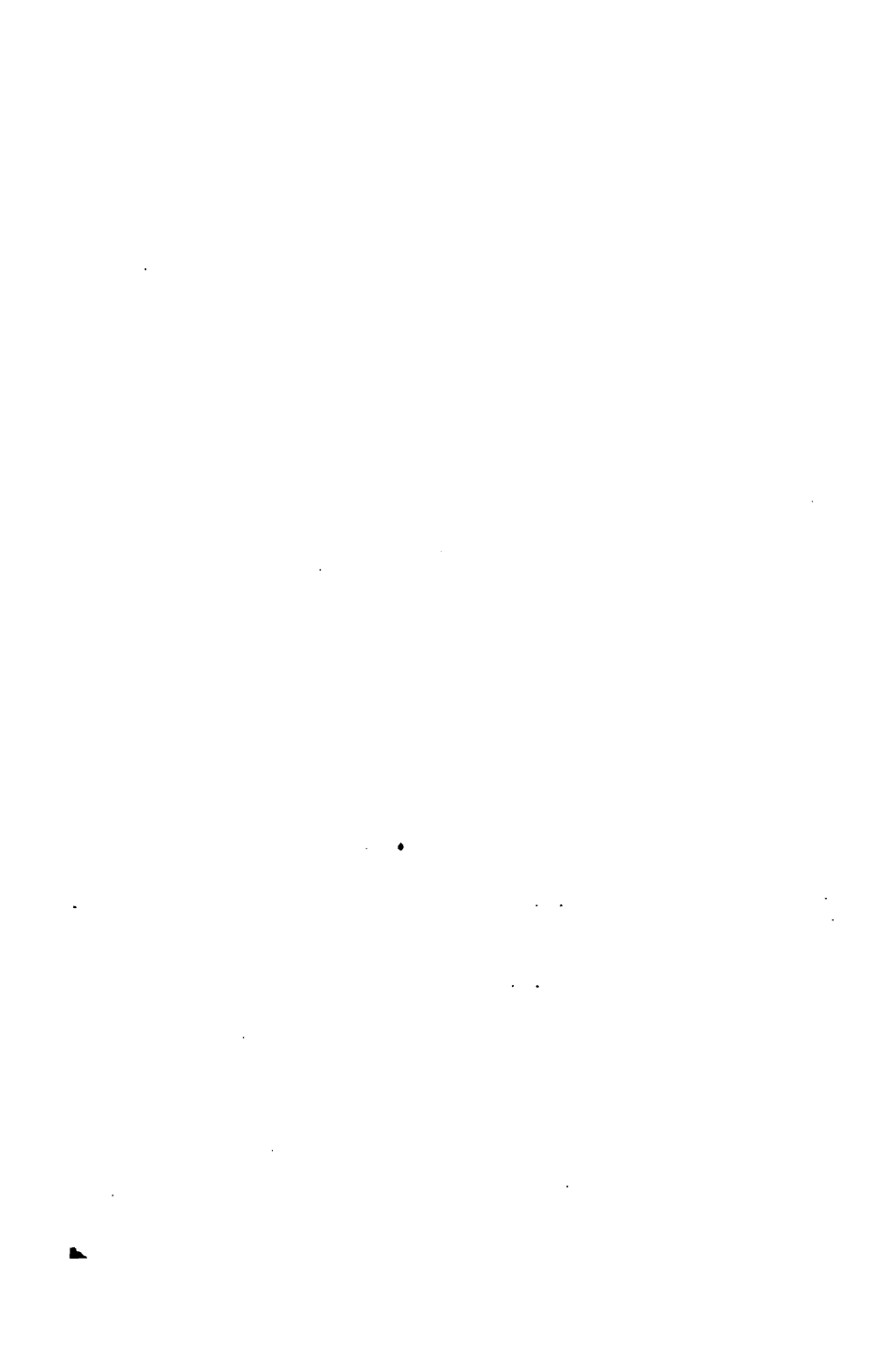
possible. A tour such as is here described should occupy about five or six weeks of time, and in the case of a party travelling together, the expenses would be about twenty-five pounds each. This book was at first commenced from a pure love of the subject, and whatever its imperfections may be, it has at least the merit of truth.

MADELINE
AND
ROSALIND } WALLACE-DUNLOP.

LONDON: *April*, 1860.

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HOW WE SPENT THE AUTUMN.

WHERE shall we go this autumn? was a question frequently mooted in our family councils. We were tired of Paris, disliked the Rhine, had spent last winter at Brighton, and Mamma objected to Scotland as being too cold. I hardly know who first solved the difficulty by suggesting Brittany; but that name, so redolent of legendary lore, fell soothingly on our ears, conjuring up visions of classic fables grafted cunningly on modern superstition; of old forests haunted by weird tales of the past, of hoary mountain-cairns where still linger the myths of antiquity; of magic fountains beside whose crystal waters spring mystic herbs with wondrous powers known but to few; and of

wild secluded valleys where romance and fantasy have woven such potent spells that their enchanted haze blinds keen-eyed Science, and the advancing wave of civilization falls back benumbed and powerless. It appeared certain, though we had already visited Brittany, that a ramble through it would be something very new and delightful; so after grave deliberation, the prospect of exploring that last remnant of the middle ages, besides the inducement of performing a pilgrimage to Ploërmel on our own account, finally carried the day, and great was the packing that ensued. I should be afraid to enumerate the number of boxes that were despatched per luggage-train to Southampton, not to mention Rose the parrot, two piping bullfinches, a cage full of canaries, and a pony. These latter travelling companions we declined admitting to the Brittany excursion, and they were left in Jersey, at which island we stopped a few days *en route* to St. Malo. Two steamers ply every week between Jersey and St. Malo or Granville; and after a lovely passage of three hours only we landed on the French coast. The custom-house officers

here exert their authority most rigorously, and dive to the very bottom of every trunk or basket that passes under their hands. As the *Venus* had brought more than a hundred passengers, we were detained for some hours at the custom-house, and were exceedingly amused at the perplexity of a poor *douanier*, who, having a large consignment of potted shrimps, meats, and other English comestibles, to examine, was most grateful for a little assistance in distinguishing between fish, flesh, or fruit. These articles, being subject to different duties, had to be first separated; an elaborate mental calculation of the specific gravity of each pot, independent of its contents, was the next consideration; and when the triumphant total would be achieved seemed a very far-off problem to solve.

The passport office had been stormed by a body of impatient travellers, reducing the officials to the last stage of exhaustion and despair, their wearied lips refusing to pronounce the English names submitted to them, and their weakened intellects striving vainly to comprehend the tide

of English-French poured forth by the owners of the said names ; till, though the scene was excessively amusing, I was well pleased when we all got quietly settled at dinner in the Hotel de la Paix, a far more comfortable and well-ordered house than its rival "De France," where you are left pretty nearly to wait on yourself, the owners falling back on the dignity of their hotel having been the birthplace of the great Chateaubriand.

A troupe of *voituriers* had surrounded us on the quay, eagerly contending for our patronage. As we wished to proceed to Dinan that night, one of these men, having persevered in following us to the hotel, gained the day, and received orders to come for us at eight o'clock, when, the *table d'hôte* being over, we were all (six in number) packed somehow into the ponderous Noah's-Ark-looking affair which was to carry us the next twenty-four miles to Dinan. Down one hill and up another, the usual characteristics of Breton land-travelling, did we go till the welcome sound of rattling over stones announced our arrival at Dinan, sleepy and tired out. A feeble light glimmered at the Hotel du

Commerce; and a *bonne*, looking wonderfully wide awake (for it was midnight), came out to receive any small packages and conduct us to our rooms. In the entrance we saw an extraordinary contrivance under the staircase, about twelve feet from the ground, a sort of large rabbit-hutch, or it might be a cupboard with a door; the only means of ascent to it was by a ladder, and the door being open, we caught sight of a pillow and sheets. Poor Marie had to climb up to this uncomfortable substitute for a bedroom, and when any travellers arrived in the night, as we had done, she descended her ladder and was all ready to receive them. In the daytime the ladder was removed, the rabbit-hutch closed, and I defy any one to have guessed what it was intended to contain.

We spent two or three days at Dinan, to renew our acquaintance with the shops and places we had formerly visited; but, as we meant to return thither on our homeward route, we thought it better to hasten on while the weather remained so favourable. Having, therefore, invested in a

map of the country and a guide-book, we made arrangements for reaching Rennes. Nora and I had condensed our ideas on the subject of



DINAN GIRLS.

luggage to a black leather-bag each, which contained all that was needful, and we found it the greatest comfort to have such a small amount of baggage to look after; we had certainly brought an empty trunk with a view to holding extra purchases, but then it did not go with us into

the interior, but was left to await our return at Dinan. By this time my mother, as we had anticipated, became alarmed at the prospect of dirty hotels, uncomfortable carriages, and rough roads, we were warned to expect in the less frequented districts, and could not be persuaded to go beyond Rennes; so Nora and I were compelled to fling ourselves on the compassion of our aunt, Lady Leslie, who kindly consented to accompany our wanderings. The other members of the party having no objection to travel with us as far as Rennes, our host of the "Commerce" furnished us with a roomy carriage and good horses, which were to take us all there, wait as long as we felt inclined to prolong our sojourn in that city, and then convey Mamma and the rest back to Dinan.

We started one fine morning at eleven, and stopped at the little village of Tinteniach to bait the horses and rest, as the distance between Dinan and Rennes is fifteen leagues (or forty-five miles). A crowded market was being held, through which we strolled till we came to the

church, where a quaintly carved old stone *bénitier* tempted me to make a hasty sketch. The school having just been dismissed, numbers of children came to gaze at us; several ran away frightened when asked to stand for a model; a few sous persuaded a little girl to remain while I trans-



FONT AT TINTENIAC.

ferred her to my paper. Nora asked some questions to make the child keep her head turned in the right direction; and received the informa-

tion that the young lady's name was "Marie Baillon," or rather, correcting herself, "Mademoiselle Baillon."

The holy water was a perfect aquarium; lively little fish chased each other round and about; but the child said that made no difference, and they *did* change the water now and then.

Tinteniach played a considerable part during the wars of the Plantagenets in Brittany, and a sister of Duguesclin's was lady of the manor in 1399. We passed through Hédé, where a picturesque ruined castle crowns the brow of the hill overlooking the village; our driver told us it had belonged to the Duchesse de Berry, but how far his information might be relied on, I cannot say. Three leagues to the right is the village of Becherel, one of the highest points in Brittany, and where in 1363 cannon were used for the first time in this province. Duguesclin, who commanded the opposing army, professed himself very little astonished at "these great guns, which were more alarming than dangerous."

About four o'clock we saw the white cupola of a church gleaming through the trees, and soon afterwards entered the streets of Rennes.

On descending at the Hotel de France, we were received, as usual in all French towns, by the mistress thereof. There never appears to be a landlord, or should such a being exist he carefully excludes himself from sight; and Madame, in her well-fitting dress and dainty cap, welcomes you gracefully at the entrance, and orders her staff of attendants to conduct you to your apartments. Madame reigns supreme in the bureau, where she seems to be engaged in checking accounts and making out bills the live-long day, though occasionally diversified by scraps of conversation with favoured *pensionnaires*, who drop in either to fetch or hang up in that secure depository the key of their chambers.

Through long passages and up interminable stairs were we led to our rooms, as a great fair was about to commence at Rennes, and every place was full. In this hotel they attended to the comfort of their inmates by laying a thick matting

over the passages every evening, which was removed in the morning; by this means travellers arriving or departing in the night did not disturb the slumbers of the residents.

As Amy wished to accompany us in our peregrinations through the town without the fatigue of walking, we made inquiries as to the possibility of hiring a donkey for her use; but Madame strongly recommended us to try a chair, as no donkeys were to be had in Rennes, and we, concluding it of course to be a Bath-chair, acquiesced in the arrangement, and calmly awaited its arrival. Great was our amazement on seeing a genuine old sedan-chair carried into the courtyard by two men, who deposited it on the ground, and, opening the door, politely requested Amy to enter. There was no help for it; and concluding sedan-chairs to be "the mode" in Rennes, we resigned ourselves to circumstances, and issued forth from the hotel-gates.

Unbounded was the delight of the smaller members of the populace, and many the witty observations made on our *cortège* wherever we

appeared: if we stopped to look at anything, a juvenile mob immediately collected; did we enter a church, they were instantly seized with an irrepressible anxiety to perform their devotions, carefully limiting their prayers to each saint in exact proportion to the amount of time we bestowed on each shrine. Amy's bearers walked away at such a rapid pace that it was difficult to keep them in sight, and occasionally in narrow streets they disappeared altogether. We always knew, however, the course they had taken by the many white-capped heads gazing in that direction, and the buzz of astonishment quickly silenced as we passed. Evidently a sedan-chair was nearly as antediluvian a sight in Rennes as it would have been in London.

We were first taken to inspect the "Porte Mordelaise." Rennes, the ancient "Condatum" of the Romans, contains many evidences of her former masters; this gateway bears an inscribed stone supposed to have been taken from an altar raised in honour of the accession, in 238, of Gordian III. to the imperial power. Quantities of

coins, bearing consular and imperial impressions, have also been discovered in the bed of the Vilaine river during the construction of quays in the town. Amy's bearers assured us that the Porte Mordelaise was built in the time of the Druids, as everything ancient in Brittany is supposed to have belonged to them.

It was to this gate that all dukes about to be crowned were led in deep mourning; here they humbly demanded the keys of the town; the Bishop then opened the gate, and preceded the duke to the cathedral, where the ceremony of coronation was performed.

Here in 1196, at the age of nine, Arthur of Bretagne (Shakespeare's Prince Arthur) was recognised as Duke by the States. The birth of this unfortunate Prince, son of Constance and Geoffroi II., after his father's death was hailed with delight by the Breton people, who believed they saw in him the great King Arthur restored to life, and, much against the wishes of Henry of England, insisted on his bearing that venerated name; these hopes, however, were soon blighted

by the cruel murder of the young Duke in 1203, by his uncle John of England.

Christianity was introduced in the beginning of the third century, and the first Christian Church was erected near the Pagan temple of Minerva, on the site of which now stands the cathedral.

Rennes passed under the power of Conan Meriadec in the fifth century, when mention is made of its first bishop; and forty years later they seem to have understood the value of titles, as we read of a Count named Giviteaël.

The cathedral as it now stands has no architectural beauty to recommend it to notice; founded in the sixteenth century, and not completed till a hundred and sixty years had elapsed, it presents a mixture of Tuscan, Gothic, Doric, and Ionic styles, which is anything but pleasing in effect.

The Church of St. Germain, to which Amy's porters conducted us, possesses two handsome windows, and the interior belongs to the fifteenth century.

Our sturdy guides laboured under no fear of

over-tiring us, and were determined we should see all they considered worthy of attention. We were, therefore, taken to Notre Dame de Bonne Nouvelle, founded by Jean IV. in fulfilment of a vow made on the field of Auray. Standing on a rising ground, this church is seen from a long distance, its white cupola glistening in the sunlight and surmounted by a colossal statue of the Virgin standing on the world, and holding in her arms the infant Jesus. Notre Dame contains more relics of saints than any other church in Rennes, besides possessing two entire skeletons, one of Sainte Septine, an early Christian martyr, taken from the catacombs and presented by the Pope. The figure is modelled in wax, with a perfectly lovely face, and the most beautiful shaped hands and feet; she is dressed in a white satin petticoat, and short crimson velvet tunic, embroidered with gold—a very masquerading dress, but as you look closer at the gay wreath that encircles her flowing curls, you discover a round, disagreeable-looking skull, while the soles of her feet display all their anatomy of bones. I have

since seen two or three more saints dressed up in the same manner, with holes left here and there by which you may assure yourself that the saintly relics are really inside.

Though the inhabitants of Rennes were most intolerant of the Huguenots, pillaging their houses and destroying their chapels on the smallest pretext, yet when the order for St. Bartholomew's massacre was proclaimed, they had the firmness to refuse obedience to the sanguinary edict.

On one side of Notre Dame stands the Bishop's palace, on the other the public promenade, now called the Thabor, formerly the garden belonging to the Abbey of St. Melaine, where the dukes watched, the night before their coronation; this abbey was founded in 640 by Salomon, tenth King. During his reign, Edwin and Cadnalon, sons of Cadnan King of England, were hospitably received at the Breton Court.

In the year 1032, the Abbey of St. George was built as a retreat for the Princess Adèle, sister of Duke Alain, and all the nobles hastened to offer their sisters and daughters as her companions;

among them we find the mother and sister of Guerin, who succeeded his father Gratin in the bishopric of Rennes, and who with *his* son was present at the opening ceremony, thereby proving that as late as the eleventh century the Breton bishops refused to take the vows of celibacy. The shady walks of the Thabor lead to the Jardin des Plantes, where we were glad enough to rest awhile and inhale the rich warm perfume of many a tropical flower under the shelter of a huge old oak, while Mamma made a tour of the greenhouses in search of new varieties of flowers for her garden ; but as Amy and Nora were both very weary, we thought it better to return as quickly as possible to our hotel, where the sedan-men had the conscience to demand eight francs for their expedition. In vain we appealed to Madame, enthroned in her bureau ; for though she had recommended this singular conveyance, she now cruelly asserted she had never heard of a similar promenade being performed, and declined giving any advice on the subject, while the men themselves assured us that they could easily gain four francs each

per day, and though we had not availed ourselves of their services for more than three hours, that made no difference.

The country around Rennes is rich, but flat. Here, in 1528, Henri IV., having been received with enthusiasm, spent two days in hunting, and killed, so runs the tradition, a monster hare with two bodies, eight legs, one head, and three ears. Everything in the town of Rennes looks fresh and bright; the streets are well kept, and regular in construction, which may partly be accounted for by the disastrous fire which, in 1720, raged for five days and nights, destroying thirty-two streets; and ten years passed away before any attempt was made to rebuild them. The shops are better than in any other town in Brittany; there is a large and handsome Palais de Justice, and the Musée contains three hundred valuable paintings, by Michael Angelo, Titian, Guido, Rubens, Claude Lorraine, &c. &c.

Two days were quickly passed in sight-seeing and gathering information as to the best routes to pursue in our future travels; and having seen

Mamma and the other members of our party safely off in the carriage which was to convey them back to Dinan, we proceeded to the railway-station *en route* for Vitré. Here we were compelled to wait fifteen minutes after taking our tickets; the paternal Government thinking that length of time necessary to calm down the perturbed nerves of railway travellers. There is a pretty little flower-garden laid out in front of the Rennes terminus, which was bright with a profusion of gay blossoms. A very stout, hot-looking priest, and two gentlemen were our companions in the train; from one of these gentlemen we learnt that it was impossible to carry out our plan of visiting the Château de Sevigné and the Roche aux Fées in the same day: he suggested leaving the Fairies' Rock till the next morning and passing the night at the little village of La Guerche. He assured us that we could easily gain access to the château, as Monsieur de Letumière, the present proprietor, was always glad to show it to strangers.

An hour's rail brought us to Vitré, one of the

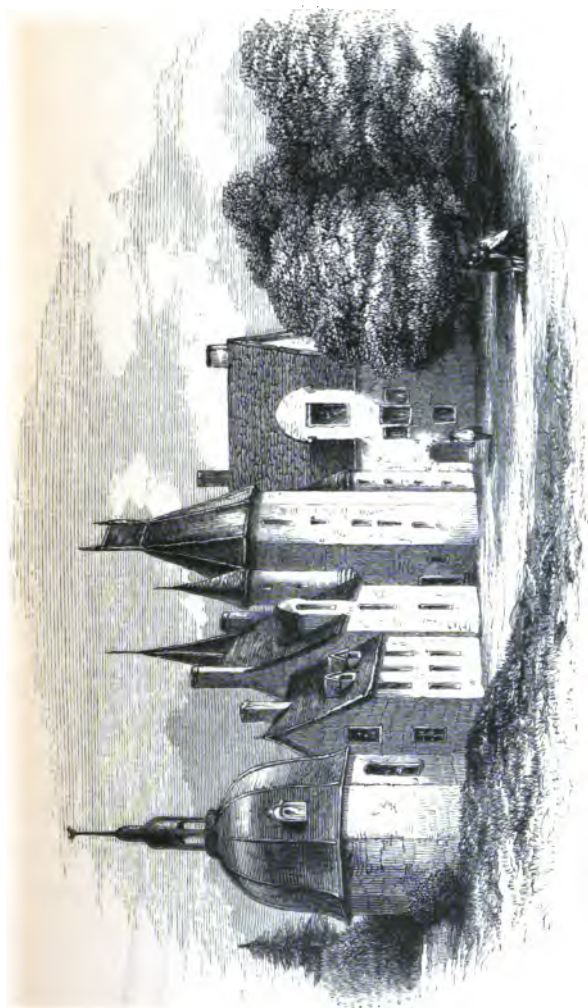
most ancient towns of Brittany; it has almost entirely lost the traces of those strong walls and fortifications which at one time rendered it so formidable. Its oldest relic appears to be the château, which overlooks the valley; here may be seen the remains of a college founded by the barons in the thirteenth century. Vitré, in the fifteenth century, was famous for its silk-weavers, who had left their native Italy to settle there; they seem to have been men of wealth; the son of one of these rich merchants was Governor of Brittany for twenty-five years, namely Landoy, treasurer to François II. Vitré was the seat of the first Barony of Bretagne, and one of its seigneurs had the care of the unhappy Prince Arthur, and delivered him with great reluctance to his uncle John.

On the right of the station are seen some antique towers, one of which bears the name of Sevigné, and close to it stands the hotel of the same name. Here we waited while arrangements were being made for our excursion to the Château des Rochers, as the residence of Madame de Sevigné is called;

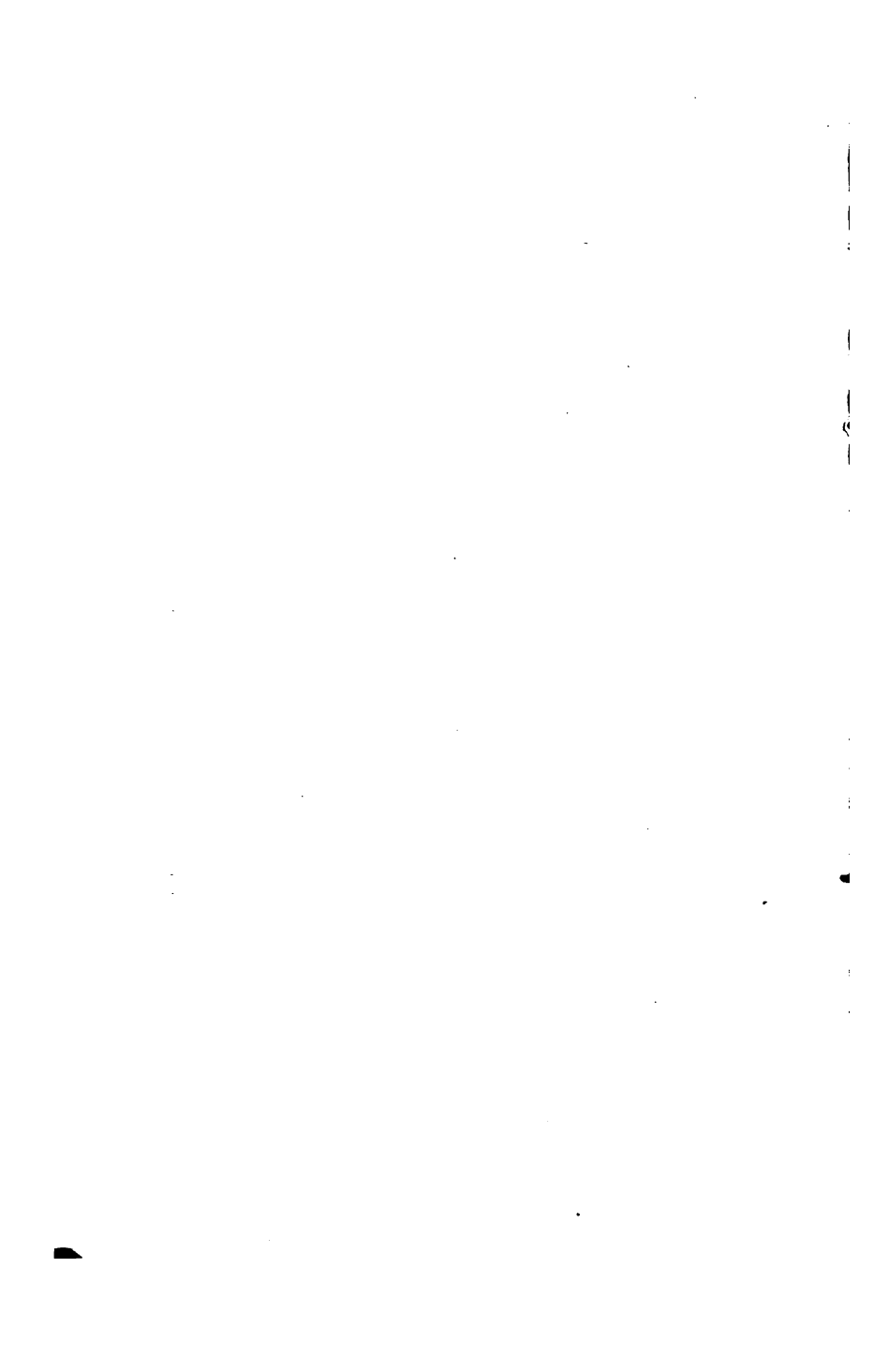
this gave us ample time for observing the style of cleanliness we were likely to encounter in our future rambles. A strong red-haired girl was busily employed in cleaning all the decanters in use in the hotel; and as cider is always drunk instead of water, a goodly array stood before her. We could scarcely believe our eyes as to the material used in cleansing them; but Nora, having interrogated the girl, elicited the information that "nothing else was half so good as manure," with which she was energetically rubbing and shaking the bottles. Having rinsed them out, the whole of the *débris* was swept off with her hands on to the stone floor just at the entrance to the public saloon, and it was there left quietly to repose without any further attempt to remove it. We suggested various expedients in the shape of sand, cinders, &c., which the girl declared were useless compared with the article she patronised; but seeing our astonishment, she began to grow a little uneasy, and promised to follow Lady Leslie's advice and try potato peelings on the next grand washing day. A gentleman, who like our-

selves was waiting for a carriage, assured us that throughout Brittany we should find the same mode adopted for washing *carafes* ; he was mistaken, however, I am happy to add, as it was in Brittany we learnt that any glass rubbed with water and sprigs of wall-pellitory is easily kept as bright and clean as crystal.

The landlady, hearing we intended visiting the Château de Sevigné, told us that we were only losing time, as no one was admitted within its walls ; that Monsieur was willing enough to let it be seen, but Madame objected. They had been much annoyed by the behaviour of some travellers, who insisted on penetrating even to the dressing-room where Madame was performing her toilet for dinner. But as it lay very near our road to La Guerche, we were not to be daunted, and determined at least to make the effort ; and, despite the assurances of our driver that we were making an excursion which would not be repaid, as he had frequently taken parties to view the château who had been compelled to return with their curiosity ungratified, we proceeded to pack our-



LES ROCHERS.—MADAME DE SEVIGNÉ'S CHATEAU.



selves in what, by courtesy, was styled a carriage, but was in reality simply a covered *char à banc*, or rather a baker's cart, with a little window on each side. After a drive of rather more than three miles, we alighted, and walked up the strip of field which skirts the garden, and opens upon the large grass-grown court at the side of the château; here we stopped, as I wished to make a sketch of the building. Not a sign was there of the vicinity of any human being; all was still and deserted. Having finished my sketch, the unpleasant moment arrived when we must try our fate of admission or refusal; and after debating the point a few minutes, my aunt became too nervous to venture, and retreated under shelter of the large gates belonging to the garden, through which we could see stately rows of yews cut in every fantastic device, long lines of oranges in their square boxes, and trim alleys of beech, close cut and tall. At length, in desperation, Nora and I advanced to the door of what appeared to be the kitchen, and seeing a woman moving about, addressed her as

to the possibility of gaining an entrance. She at first pronounced any admittance as impossible and out of the question ; but as we lingered a few moments on the doorstep, unwilling to depart from a place around which such a halo of interest was flung, she seemed to relent, and telling us that the family were absent, added that she would go and ask the *garçon* left in charge of the house whether we might inspect the rooms. The *garçon* graciously returned with the woman ; and having signified his intention of escorting us himself, we hastened to summon Lady Leslie from her retreat, and entered the house of the world-famed Marquise.

We were led through a *salle à manger*, adorned by a tall glass cabinet, containing rare old china, and quaintly fashioned silver articles, into the bedroom of the great authoress. The walls were hung with portraits of her family ; opposite was her own likeness, representing a face with full sleepy eyelids and long-shaped dark eyes ; on another wall was her grand-daughter, *en bergère*, a lovely piquante face. Here stood her secretaire, with its old-fashioned and much-used japanned

inkstand, and a large book full of her writings, duly attested as genuine by those learned in such matters; all the furniture was covered with rose-coloured brocaded silk, and the bed was rich with embroidered tapestry. A door led into her dressing room, only just large enough to accommodate her toilette-table, and a large arm-chair without a back in which she sat while having her hair dressed. Here was a brilliant set of scarlet japanned boxes, trays, &c. The *garçon*, in the most approved cicerone style, showed us a brush and powder-puff, which were the very identical ones used by Madame de Sevigné. Certainly she must always have had her hair dressed before donning her hoop; and ladies'-maids in those days did not imitate the fashions worn by their mistresses, as that tiny room could never have accommodated anything of the sort. We passed out, and went on to the *salon*, where hang more Sevigné portraits, though the present owner of the château is not of that family. The *garçon* was melancholy and taciturn, and accepted his gratuity with a solemn and frigid air of dignity. On regaining

our carriage, the driver could hardly believe us when we assured him we had seen all that was to be seen, and congratulated us on our good fortune in gaining admittance where so many were denied.

After leaving the château, we passed through Argentré, where, in 1402, many noblemen founded a brotherhood in honour of the Virgin, and held an annual meeting every August in the church. Among the founders is mentioned Guillaume de Seigné; and some fifty years later a seigneur of that name was created Knight Banneret. The old Chateau of Plessis still stands in the valley of Argentré.

We had made a slight *détour* to visit the château, and were now obliged to return to the main road which led to La Guerche, past orchards where the broom-bushes touched the branches of the apple-trees; these bushes seem to be regularly grown in many parts of Brittany, just as we would grow any other crop at home.

We arrived at La Guerche (the Breton word for Virgin) as the twilight was commencing; and having deposited our belongings at the Croix

Blanche, adjoined to the church, which still preserves marks of its construction in the thirteenth century, as well as some good though mutilated stained-glass windows. Though now a small village, it was at one time fortified, and had the honour in the tenth and eleventh centuries of giving several bishops to Rennes, besides owning, in 1379, the great Duguesclin as its seigneur.*

We found, on returning to the hotel, that our bustling little hostess, Madame Tricot, had got dinner ready for us, and was quite anxious for a good talk over all we meant to do. It is the great delight of French people to sit down and discuss the project on hand in every possible point of view; it is much better to allow this, as it puts them in a good humour, and they really enter heartily into your plans. Madame Tricot informed us that the gentleman in the kitchen (N.B. the said gentleman was clothed in fustian, and smoked his pipe by the kitchen fire) had given it as his opinion that we were Basses Bretonnes; but

* La Guerche was taken by the English under the Duke of Somerset in 1443, but was ransomed for a sum of money by François I. of Bretagne.

she knew better, as a few weeks ago she had seen an English lady in the same costume, namely, wearing a straw hat. Now commenced the knotty point of settling how we were to be conveyed to the Roche aux Fées, a large Druidical temple, which we had heard was one of the best in Brittany, and thence to Chateaubriant, *en route* to Nantes. Madame Tricot's carriage would hold three; but then where was the luggage to be placed—my aunt's box and our two bags? At length, after a grave and deliberate inspection of us all, she came to the conclusion that "*La petite* could easily sit between her aunt and sister." Then, turning to Lady Leslie, she remarked, in a consoling manner, "They have not got large crinolines; you will not have much to suffer; and then the baggage can be placed on the seat by the driver." This being satisfactorily settled, we retired to our rooms up a staircase which might easily have been mistaken for a ladder, and were obliged to help ourselves up by means of a large knotted rope, which hung down one side by way of banister. Nevertheless, the rooms, when we reached them, were scrupu-

lously clean, and each had its clock and vases of artificial roses quite *en règle*. Madame Tricot was justly proud of the purity of her household linen, and recounted the visit of a French lady, who, before she looked at the rooms, announced her intention of passing the night on two chairs, which was painful in the extreme to Madame's feelings; but after persuading the lady at least to make a trial of the bed, she acknowledged that she never had slept better even in Paris, and the honour of the Croix Blanche was vindicated.

Next morning commenced our first experience in early rising, as Madame Tricot was anxious that her horse should return the same evening; and we were compelled, much to Nora's disgust, to start about eight, which necessitated our being up by six. Our coachman was a keen, earnest-looking man, one of those true Breton faces, with their deep-set, thoughtful eyes, square brows, and high noses; he was very ready to converse and give us any information in his power, though rather uncertain as to the exact site of the Roche aux Féés, as he had never visited it before. We

therefore stopped at the village of Essé ; and the driver having inquired the road of an old man digging a grave in the churchyard, the latter, after a few seconds' deliberation, came to the conclusion that the shortest plan would be to show us the way himself, leaving the grave for a future spare moment. Our advent caused tremendous excitement in the village, as the boys were just leaving school, and they flocked around to inspect the new importation to their village. We were requested to alight, as the carriage could go no farther, for though a road was in course of construction which would almost pass the temple, it was not yet in a fit state for vehicles to attempt the passage ; the horse was therefore put up at the inn stable, and the sexton, pointing out the road we were to take, departed to his cottage for his coat, whence he soon emerged and overtook us in high spirits and unbounded flow of language, questioned our driver minutely as to where he came from and all he knew about us, then turning to us pursued the same laudable efforts for useful information. He was a garrulous

old man; and though full seventy years old, was as active as any of us, stopping to pick up acorns, with which he soon filled his pockets, stamping on chesnut husks to force them to yield their polished fruit, and then off across a field to make a raid on a particularly good apple-tree. All these acquisitions he offered to us; and if he met a countryman, he mysteriously placed a few acorns in his hands, telling him it was a valuable gift. All the people round seemed to know him, and smiled at his strange, flighty ways. He wore a long night-cap, the tassel of which jerked and twitched about much in the style of its owner. The road soon came to an end, and we were led through fields and across innumerable stiles and hedges, under huge chesnut and oak trees, by banks covered with monster blackberries, for at least a mile and a half, till we suddenly entered the field where stands the temple; which could not be seen until close upon its precincts, owing to the number of trees that surrounded its site. Our loquacious guide expatiated largely on its size and beauty, challenging us to count the exact number

of stones of which it was composed. My aunt commenced the task, but could never make the same number come right each time; and the old man assured us they had never yet been counted twice alike, but it is supposed there are about fifty blocks. The temple or dolmen has a long covered alley of approach to it, and the height of the stones averages from eight to ten feet. One of the horizontal slabs forming the roof is an enormous mass; Nora and I climbed on to the top of it, and with the help of our driver measured the length, which was twenty-one feet. In the neighbourhood is a rivulet, which is still called the stream of blood, in allusion to the sacrifices made by the Druids. Many conjectures have been hazarded as to the manner in which these stones were brought and raised to their present position, as no stone of that formation is to be met with for nearly four miles to the south-west.*

* The "poulpicans," who are the husbands of the fairies, go on winter evenings to dance round the cromlechs, and those who hear their cries, if they are wise, remain within doors, and, devoutly saying a prayer, place a vessel full of grain before their beds, for if the "poulpicans" entered they would upset the

Our guide inquired patronisingly if we had ever seen anything of the kind before. He knew there could not be anything of the sort in England, as there were but two in France; he didn't know where the other one might be, but felt convinced it was not as fine as this one. He was very facetious on the subject of the stones, saying it must have been a delicate fairy that carried them, and we should positively take one away in our pockets as a *souvenir*. He gave us a short sketch of his own life. Born in Spain, where his father was serving with the army, he was brought up as *enfant de troupe*, a life of misery. At ten years of age he became a drummer, which entailed more misery; later in life he married, and became the father of six children; here the misery grew worse than ever—whether in consequence of the hard times or the evils of matrimony, he was not very careful to explain, but the groans, shrugs of the shoulders, and jerks of that expressive tassel were most

seed, and being compelled by their nature to pick up grain by grain, the operation would employ them the whole night. All druidical monuments are haunted, in Breton imaginations, by various kinds of fairies.—M. SOUVESTRE'S *Derniers Bretons*.

emphatic. His children were now working for themselves; his youngest girl was twenty, and gaining at the rate of sixty-five francs per annum. "Think," he exclaimed with parental exultation, "how well she must be doing to earn that!" Here we came to a long flat piece of stone lying on the ground and broken across the middle. Our guide interrupted his retrospections to tell us, that this was the sole remnant of a very old chapel which used to stand there; it was burnt two years ago, and the authorities had it pulled down. All this property belongs to the Hospital at Rennes. This stone bore marks of geese and ducks' feet impressed on it, and our cicerone declared it was as ancient as the Druidical remains we had just quitted. No one knows how or when the stone was broken; it is supposed to have been the work of some mischievous person during the night. He then glided off to more modern affairs, relating to the differences in our respective creeds; for himself, he was not quite sure, but rather inclined to give the preference to Protestantism; and then, in a burst of confidence, he announced, "Protestantism is a religion of

charity, but Romanism is a religion of money." As we approached the village, he pointed to an image of the Virgin placed over a door, and pityingly remarked that *some* people believed in that sort of thing, but then he had been a soldier and had seen the world. We were all very weary with our rough ramble; but the old sexton never flagged, continually flitting about, climbing into this field to hail a neighbour and exchange a few words in a high key, or else groping in a ditch for more acorns, with which he had stuffed even his cap, causing the tassel to stand erect like a tall extinguisher; he evidently thought very badly of us for being tired with a slight walk which he took as an extra to his day's work not worth considering.

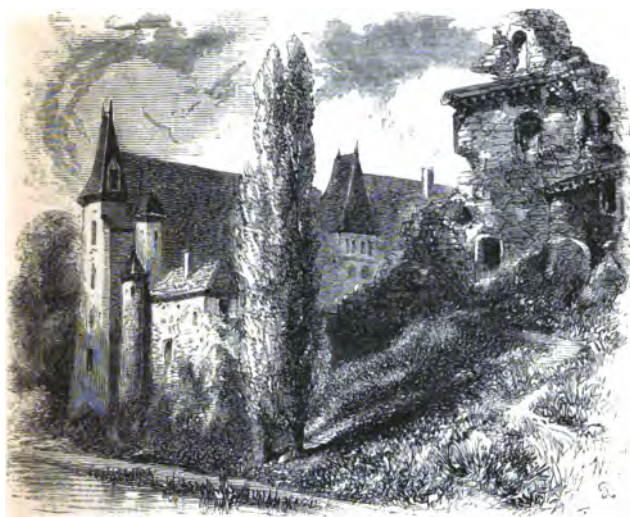
Our return to Essé was announced by the instant release of both boys' and girls' schools, the master and mistress being aware of the utter futility of attempting to keep them in bounds. Some of the children were really pretty; but any attempt at sketching was followed by the instant disappearance of that particular child, who by

instinct knew it was wanted, and perversely hid itself in consequence. These children had each a huge wedge of black bread, with a piece of butter stuck into a hole in the thick end; some tiny hands grasped a large clasp knife, but most of them preferred that more primitive implement, the thumb, for spreading their butter.

Our road now lay along the banks of a large lake called Marcillé Robert, where the long reedy grass and desolate shores offered a secure hiding-place for snipe, of which our driver told us there were plenty to be had. We stopped at Martigné, famous for its iron-works, and hired a fresh horse; such a ponderous white animal, whom nothing could persuade to proceed quicker than he thought fit, but, as we eventually reached Cha-teaubriant in ample time to wander about before dusk, it did not much signify. The direct road from La Guerche is about six leagues, but our *détour* by Essé quite doubled the distance. We paid twenty-five francs for the carriage, and three to the coachman. The drivers are generally content with two francs per day as their *pour*

boire ; but if they had any extra trouble on our behalf, we gave them another franc.

The splendid old château is the pride of the town ; it is a most imposing building, beautifully



CHATEAUBRIANT.

situated on the banks of one of those many pretty streams that help to swell the waters of the Vilaine river. One half is in ruins, the other half inhabited ; the ruins are very ancient. In 1250, Geoffroi of Chateaubriant returned home

unexpectedly from the Crusades, and his wife Sibille, who had mourned him as dead, died of joy on seeing him. The newer part was built by Jean de Laval in 1524, to amuse his solitude during the absence at court of his wife, the fair and frail Françoise de Foix. Soon after their marriage she was inveigled to court (much against her husband's wishes) by one of those senseless wagers that were so often lost and won in olden days. Her rare beauty attracted the attention of Francis I., and she was soon immersed in all the follies and intrigues of his court; while her aggrieved husband buried himself in his château, nursing his wrath, and biding his time for revenge, till a new favourite came to reign at court, and the erring wife returned home. Her butterfly life was ended, and her punishment was prepared; the stern Laval imprisoned her with her little girl in that same round tower that still frowns down on the peaceful valley, and tried to destroy them by starvation. The poor child drooped and died in six months, the unhappy mother dragged on a miserable existence till the relentless husband,

finding famine did not kill her quickly enough, had her bled to death.* These old French châteaux are so haunted by tales of blood and crime, they all look like gloomy and dreary prisons. The Duc d'Aumale bought this château, which had passed out of the family before the birth of the great Chateaubriand, who could count twenty-three noble grandfathers, from Briant at the battle of Hastings in 1066, and downwards. The place now belongs to Government, and is used as a sousprefecture of police. The country round Chateaubriant has been the scene of so many wars, that its history is rich in moving incidents; it was near this that a brave young priest, during the Revolution, used to persist in performing service in a retired chapel long after the celebration of mass had been forbidden. One morning the soldiers surprised him in the act; the congregation all fled, and the priest tried to make his escape by swimming a very swollen

* It is only fair to the memory of Françoise to say, that Père Lobineau vehemently denies the truth of this story. It is certain, however, that the king gave her the rents of the châteaux of Sucinio and L'Estrenic, and the Isle of Ruis, which rents were kept by Jean after his wife's death.

stream. Only two soldiers ventured to follow ; he had already gained some distance, when, looking round, he saw his two pursuers were being carried down the stream, and must be drowned. He turned back, and with great exertion succeeded in rescuing them ; he then begged them to allow him to regain his original distance before they again started in pursuit ; but after the act of heroism, which had been witnessed by the whole army, he was of course permitted to depart in safety. During the wars of La Vendée, a poor wounded Royalist soldier managed to crawl to a cottage in a neighbouring wood, and implored assistance ; the occupants, a mother and daughter, though miserably poor, took pity on the suppliant, nursed and hid him many days, till he was sufficiently recovered to rejoin his regiment. He had engaged himself to the girl, and the day of his departure they went to a stone cross in the wood to plight their troth together : while kneeling before it, the soldier took a silver ring from his finger and wished to give it to his betrothed ; it dropped on the ground, he stooped to pick it up, when

the girl suddenly saw round her the faces of the enemy's soldiers; she could not speak to tell her lover, he only read his danger in her pallid face, and was shot down in the act of putting the ring on her hand.

The Hôtel des Postes was a quiet, unpretending house, where we had a *jour maigre* dinner; but in France that is no hardship, they have so many different ways of doing up eggs, fish, and vegetables. Our landlady came in to keep up our spirits by promising us partridges for breakfast in the morning. There is a dépôt for Angelique sweet-meat at the hotel. The plant is grown in the château gardens, and manufactured into sweet-meat in the town, so it is very fresh and cheap; we got a large box for three francs.

We took our places in the little diligence (paying four francs each) which leaves every morning for Nort, five leagues off, from which point you find a steamer down the Erdre to Nantes. We passed through a flat, rich, well-cultivated tract of land, teeming with game; our *conducteur* purchased from a countryman for three or four francs

a number of partridges to sell again in Nantes ; he counted and arranged the contents of his basket afterwards on board the steamer, and found he had more than three dozen. This neighbourhood must have been always celebrated for game, as François II., having made a bet with Seigneur Chaffault who could kill most partridges in a month, came down with his chasseurs and birds to Chateaubriant, as being the most likely spot in which to win the match. This duke was so fond of sport that he made a law, forbidding all yeomen to hunt any kind of game with any kind of weapons under pain of imprisonment and a fine of sixty livres. The passion for the chase had become so great, that many nobles ruined whole parishes to extend their forests, and so enlarge their hunting grounds.

The country you pass through is too flat to be interesting in form, but the colouring is rich in the extreme. Monsieur de Souvestre says truly, "Autumn is the time to see Brittany in its beauty, when the buckwheat and corn harvests are just being cleared away ;" but the apple-trees

are still laden with their rosy fruit, the feathery poplars are faintly tinted with paly yellow, and the ever-varying beeches have been "lightly touched by Autumn's fiery finger." The soft emerald-green of the pasture fields is thrown out by the rich red brown of the fading ferns; and when over this brilliant mass of colour floats the warm glowing scent of the deep golden gorse, one does not regret the absence of more striking scenery.

The sleepy tranquillity of Nort is rarely broken, save by the arrival and departure of the steamers. We waited at least an hour after the appointed time of starting was past; but time to a Breton is of no importance whatever. We amused ourselves by feeding the fish, which rose in shoals to gobble down crumbs of bread, and watching the neat countrywomen with their varied *coiffures*, each carrying a basket and umbrella, coming on board to be transported to sundry little villages on the banks of the river. Before we left, the man who brought our things on board came to ask for some gratuity, and, in accordance with

the instructions I had received, I presented to him (not without hesitation) five sous, and was astonished and relieved to find he was quite contented. Fancy an English porter in the same position. French people never seem to give more than two sous for a service of this sort, and always receive a cheerful *mercie* in return ; but it requires, at first, some resolution to offer a few sous to a long-bearded man who, although he wears a blouse, lifts his hat to you with the air of an emperor. I have since learned to place a far greater value on sous, and always collected them ; you cannot carry a sufficient number in a purse to be of any use for the innumerable beggars that assail you, but it is easy to get a nice little grey leather bag, with a steel snap and chain, to fasten to your side, for two francs, and it soon repays you a high interest in the shape of comfort.

The banks of the Erdre are very pretty, though not striking ; you wind in and out among rich low-lying pasture-lands and undulating woods, thickly studded with fanciful châteaux of every

possible date of construction, from the grey hoary deserted tower, centuries old, to the white shining erections hardly finished, with gay groups of fashionable ladies sauntering about.

Quaint little hamlets dot the banks, nestling round their churches, or half hidden in clumps of trees. Our bell rings out as we near each village, and flat-bottomed, unwieldy boats row out, and, hooking themselves on to the steamer-sides, effect an exchange of passengers; we drop numbers of country people by the way, and receive instead parties of chasseurs and their dogs returning home with their spoils. These gentlemen are dressed in wonderfully theatrical and effective hunting costumes; but though they seemed most energetic and excited on the subject of shooting, they did not appear to have been very successful in their sport, the fringed and knotted game-bags being very empty, and one gentleman told us he and two companions had only got three partridges and a rabbit between them. Some of these chasseurs held most animated conversations regarding their sport,

one gentleman asserting he had killed five partridges one morning; on which a young Breton, who was very downcast about his own success, declared "it was impossible."

The number and industry of the spiders in these parts is most surprising; they weave a network of silky threads over all the meadows, so the cows seem standing in a glistening and impalpable haze, which shifts in the hot sunlight, and reflects the slanting rays in paths of light just as calm water does. Long, almost invisible, threads were found everywhere; and some I saw floating over the river must have been fastened up in the sky, as there was no possible object for them to hang from.

It was very amusing to see the cows, as evening approached, walking leisurely to the banks by themselves, and stepping into punts to be carried across the river. Sometimes a frisky young bull would stick his tail in the air and take a good gallop in a contrary direction to his boat; then the little boy in charge of the herd had to start off in pursuit; the other animals took no notice

of such vagaries, but walked steadily to their respective landing-places ready to be taken home. These deeply laden punts slowly pushing off, with their long shadows reflected over the still water, looked very pretty, and gave a new interest to the scene. In summer, this river must be covered with water-lilies, but we were too late to see their creamy blossoms. We reached Nantes by seven, just as dusk had closed in; and the bright lamps starting into life all round alone showed the extent of the town.

We went to the Hôtel de Bretagne, as it was close to the steamer, and the mate assured us it was much patronised by all the French families round.

Nantes is literally built on a series of islands formed by the Loire, and the number of bridges connecting the streets seem really endless; in one direction you pass over seven in a straight line. The banks of the river make nice promenades for the inhabitants.

There are some very handsome white stone houses and good shady squares in Nantes; of

course, the town would not be complete without its statue of Duguesclin. It is a rich place, and from its position has great commercial advantages, yet it is a sleepy town, and we found it difficult to get any information. We wished to learn the address of a gentleman who had been some years a resident, but our inquiries were quite useless, no one had ever heard his name; and even at the post-office we should have learnt nothing, had not an English gentleman present politely come forward, and informed us our friend was out of town, but he would be happy to aid us in any way, and thereon kindly devoted some hours to guiding us to the different lions. The Musée is filled with paintings of many degrees of merit and mediocrity; one picture, of two little bulls defying each other to mortal combat, is very celebrated, but I think the most striking painting in the collection is Daniel in the Lions' Den—the luminous atmosphere thrown around the angel, who is awing the lions into submission, is more unearthly than anything I remember.

Nantes is said to have been built by Ramnes, King of the Gauls, in the year of the world 2715, and is mentioned by Strabo, Cæsar, Pliny, and Ptolemy.

Its ecclesiastical history commences at an early date, as its first Bishop, St. Clair, said to have been a disciple of St. Peter and St. Paul, was elected in 280, during the reign of the Emperor Probus, about a century before Conan Meriadec made it the capital of his kingdom.

Like many other Breton churches, the cathedral is founded on the site of a pagan temple to the god Volianus, and in 568 it was decorated with great splendour by St. Felix, and paved with coloured marbles; a silver crucifix, embellished with gold and precious stones, was suspended by silver chains from the roof, while on a marble column in the centre of the church reposed a large ruby of such powerful brilliancy that it lighted up the cathedral at night. All these splendours were, however, destroyed by the Normans, who were invited to Nantes in 843 by Lambert, to revenge himself on the inha-

bitants, who refused to accept him as their head, thirty days after which insult, the Norman fleet arrived in the Loire; they easily effected a landing, ravaged the town, pillaged the churches, and took numbers of prisoners. They infested the Loire for more than twenty years.

Early one summer morning in 1041, a fearful storm of wind burst over Nantes. Houses, churches, and towers were blown down, forests uprooted, and many lives lost. All believed the end of the world had arrived; had it continued any length of time, nothing would have remained but a heap of ruins.

François II., last Duke of Bretagne, was besieged here by the King's army. The country people rose *en masse*, and hastened to his assistance: so great was the concourse, that, in passing a small river, they drank it up, leaving it dry. Historians compared it to the army of Xerxes.

François was much beloved by his people, and in 1459 obtained a bull from Pope Sixtus, authorizing him to build a college at Nantes. In the same year, he also requested the Pope's

permission to traffic with Turks and infidels, which rapidly increased the riches of the country to such an extent that silver vessels might be found even in peasants' houses.

Among the curious feudal rights of Nantes may be cited that of the Seigneur de Rais, who demanded a *denier* from every butcher in the town on Shrove Tuesday. His servants presented a needle, and if the coin was not ready in the tradesman's hand, they stuck the needle into any piece of meat they liked, and carried it off without permitting him to look in his purse.

The present cathedral, built on the site of the old one, has a very grand nave of an immense height, one hundred and twenty feet, and on one side the doorways are richly ornamented, and perfectly beautiful; the splendid brass gates were broken up at the Revolution. The rest of the church is in a debased style, but there is a lovely tomb in the transept to Francis II., last Duke of Brittany, who died 1488, and his second wife Marguerite de Foix, executed by Michel Colomb, a Breton artist. The two white sleeping

figures, exquisitely sculptured, are laid on an immense slab of black marble, supported by four life-size allegorical figures; on the sides are the twelve apostles in white, and a number of little mourning figures in black marble. This is one of the most beautiful *renaissance* monuments that the revolutionary demons spared to France; some perfect outlined drawings of it may be procured in Nantes. While this monument was so fortunately preserved, the tomb of Jean IV, was totally destroyed. It was very beautiful, and would have been exceedingly interesting to us from the fact that it was made in England and brought to Nantes in the reign of Henri IV. English artists were held in great repute in Brittany during the fifteenth century. Alas! are their descendants in these degenerate days utterly extinct, or only lying in some enchanted trance, waiting the appointed moment of waking?

Nantes owes the very pretty new and unfinished church of St. Nicolas to the spirited exertions of a young priest; the dazzling purity of its white

stone and the completeness of its details make it a great ornament to the city; it contains two modern statues by Barré, one of our Saviour, and a Magdalene.

A funeral service was just concluding as we entered, and all the funeral insignia were still displayed. The French endeavour to heighten the solemnity of these ceremonies by carrying canopies with hideous death's heads on them, and velvet palls *parsemé* with white tears. It is considered complimentary to attend these services; and a box at the door, which we thought was meant to receive money, is really intended to hold visiting cards: the bereaved family regard the cards in this box as visits of condolence.

The château is a grand old building, very large, parts of it date from 840; it has stood many sieges, but is still in good preservation, and garrisoned by soldiers. It was here that Henri IV. signed his well-known edict; and here also was born, in 1477, the famous Anne of Brittany, whose heart in a gold case is still preserved in the Musée. The hand of this celebrated Princess

(daughter of Francis II.) was sought in marriage by nearly all the crowned heads of Europe. Maximilian of Austria, Charles VIII. of France, Richard III. of England, and his rival Duke of Richmond, afterwards Henry VII., who was then in exile at the court of Brittany, as well as the Duke of Orleans, afterwards Louis XII., were all suitors to the fair Bretonne, whose youthful affections appear to have been fixed on Louis of Orleans. She was betrothed to Maximilian, but the marriage was never completed. Then Charles besieged her in Rennes, and at the request of the States, united to the persuasions of Louis, who was very diplomatically released from prison for this express purpose, she consented to marry Charles at the early age of fifteen; seven years afterwards he died, and within the twelvemonth she married his successor, Louis XII., her first lover. She was far more proud of being Duchess of Brittany than Queen of France, and preserved the independence of her Duchy intact. She lived much at Nantes and Dinan, and her memory is still enshrined in Breton hearts as their beloved

Duchess. Louis adored his wife, and during the expedition to Italy (when Anne was Regent of France) he placed the arms of Bretagne and his Queen's initials over the gate of every town that capitulated to him. In 1532, Brittany lapsed to the French crown, but the three centuries since have not sufficed to change Bretons into Frenchmen. What that powerful organ of civilization — railroads — may effect, remains to be proved.

The infamous revocation of the Edict of Nantes will always remain a blot on her history, which has truly been a stormy one: the scenes of blood and atrocity enacted during the Revolution were unparalleled even in France. Hundreds of people were drowned *en masse* in the Loire, which was called *baignoire nationale*; they were towed out in boats, which were scuttled in the middle of the stream, and any poor wretch who rose to the surface was struck down by those around. Hideous and monstrous fish found their way up from the deep sea, to feed on the loathsome banquet prepared for them in the Loire. The building

where the poor victims were imprisoned still exists in Nantes, also the house of the cruel Carrier, who superintended the executions.

You must walk along the quays to gain any just idea of the size of Nantes, or of its immense commercial and manufacturing population. There were hundreds of vessels waiting for their cargoes ; and we heard that at least fifty ships were outside, unable to enter the city on account of the lowness of the water. There are many English residents in Nantes, which is a good place to pass Sunday at, as you have here a Protestant church, a difficult thing to find in most Breton towns. House-rent is not very expensive, but living is dear for France ; butter is fivepence per pound, veal sevenpence, and mutton eightpence.

Nantes boasts a theatre, and all the usual amusements of a large town. In fact, the whole department of Loire Inférieure, though included in the old Duchy, can hardly be called Bretagne Proper, it is too much civilized ; besides, the inhabitants do not speak their mother tongue, that language so dear to the heart of every true

Breton, that he believes it was one of the first established after the Deluge.

After an immense amount of patient inquiry and deep research, we made out that steamers left St. Nazaire at the mouth of the Loire for Belle Isle every other day; but the people of Nantes are so very phlegmatic that it is nearly impossible to get anything out of them. According to their statements we had yet a day to wait at Nantes, and our landlord (the first we had seen and actually spoken to) advised us to hire a carriage for the day and drive to Clisson, twenty-one miles distant, where a ruined castle would well repay the trouble of a visit. There was nothing more to be seen at Nantes, so we acquiesced in this arrangement, and departed at nine next morning in a very respectable carriage. The Loire divides itself into so many streams just here, that we had five bridges to cross before reaching the opposite side; the country round was flat and uninteresting, covered with vines, the fruit of which was just being gathered, and looked anything but tempting. Near Clisson the scenery improved, broken by

undulating ground and well-wooded banks down to the two little rivers which pass through the village, the Moine and the Sevre Hautaise; over the former a splendid bridge has been built with a double row of arches underneath, presenting a most curious effect when viewed from the banks of the river. The Castle of Clisson towers over the Sevre, and we had a steep walk under a grilling sun to reach the principal gate, as it would be impossible for any vehicle to get up such an abrupt ascent. The moat was overgrown with ivy, now in full blossom, and dozens of gaily painted butterflies hovered over it; the bright tints of their wings, as they flitted about in the sunlight, forming a strange contrast to the dark ivy and grey old walls of the ruin. A little house has been built just inside the entrance, and is inhabited by the *concierge*, who is always at hand to conduct visitors over the castle. Built in 1223 by Oliver de Clisson, it fell a victim to the ravages committed during the Vendéan war. A tall fir-tree in the court attracted our notice; our guide said it was planted over a well where sixty

men, women, and children were hidden during the troubles, but having been discovered they were ruthlessly dragged out and cruelly burnt to death, the castle itself was then fired, and was so strong that two months were spent in consuming it. Large masses of clematis now hang over the crumbling walls in luxuriant festoons, hiding their mutilations, and gigantic polypodium fern forms a verdant crown for the broken battlements; the walls still remaining prove it to have been a large and powerful stronghold. As we passed under an arch, a small bell was rung close to us by a little girl, and there in a niche of the old gate; she had dressed up a mossy altar where a plaster cast of the Virgin stood enthroned, and surrounded by flowers. The child begged for sous; what she did with them I know not, as she seemed too well dressed to be in real poverty; but more visitors arriving were instantly assailed by the indefatigable little beggar. Over heaps of blackened stones, through narrow passages, past towers, whose broken beams showed where staircases and floorings once had stood, did the woman

lead us, till at the end of a long dark passage almost underground we entered a small dungeon, where many poor prisoners shut out from light and sound have counted the weary hours ; among them was Jean V., Duke of Brittany, who passed three months in a solitude unbroken save by the daily visit of the jailor bringing his scanty meal. One part of this château is of more modern construction, dating from the fourteenth century ; in it are *oubliettes* down whose dark depths you glance with a shudder, two large dungeons, one for women, another for men, also an immense vaulted room with two huge iron hooks in the ceiling, from which the unfortunate creatures were hung ; the walls, of white plaster, are scored with grotesque figures in red chalk, the work of the unhappy ones imprisoned there prior to execution. We lingered as long as we dared over the ruins, calling up many a sad memory of the past, and peopling these deserted haunts anew, and then went on to La Garenne, on the opposite side of the river ; it is an unfinished house, which was commenced years ago, and is now closed up, but its

situation and grounds are very beautiful. Our guide this time was a man, *concierge* of the place, very well informed apparently, and with an astonishing memory for verses. At each point of sight he repeated endless lines, more or less clever, composed by the various visitors to the place. It belongs to a Monsieur Le Mot, whose name affords a subject for many with which to point their rhymes. It is difficult to recall a verse, however striking, that you have only heard once; but I will try just to illustrate his style. The ground at our feet was strewn with acorns, and something was said about their being the best possible food for pigs. "Ah, that reminds me," said he, "some one said—

"Il faudrait mettre un chêne
Pour l'arbre de la liberté,
Car ses fruits nourrissent sans peine
Les animaux qui l'ont plantés."

A statue of Faustina, very much discoloured by the weather, drew forth some very neat lines, showing that, although the lady possessed neither diamonds nor crinoline, she could at least boast a complete set of black ornaments.

Facing La Garenne, on the opposite height stands a pillar surmounted by a bust of Henri IV., who besieged the Castle of Clisson for eight days unsuccessfully; the pillar was erected by the town of Clisson to commemorate their triumph.

Monsieur Le Mot's father is interred near this pillar, under a Grecian temple; he was a sculptor, and brought many curious things from Rome to beautify the already nature-gifted La Garenne; amongst others a statue of Cicero, which some mischievous person has deprived of its nose.

The Moine river winds its peaceful way between thickly-wooded banks. Among these shady walks and tranquil bowers is a small rocky cave, to which Heloise fled, pursued by the tyranny of her uncle, and found shelter for several days, but was at last tracked by dogs and discovered. Near the "Grotto of Heloise" stands a small granite pillar, which our guide assured us was the most curious thing in the place; and if his account of it was true, it certainly was. He said it had been dug up in the neighbourhood, together with some Roman pavement. A Latin inscription states, that "Augustus

Cæsar made this road from Rome ; Adrian and Trajan repaired it." Not understanding a word of what he read off so fluently, we were content to accept his translation. Close to this Roman relic stands an old statue of François I., which M. Le Mot, with thorough French sentiment, erected there ; a touching *souvenir* of departed days, for the statue overlooks the river, by whose winding banks Diana of Poitiers was wont to ramble.

The *concierge* and his wife live in a pleasant little cottage at the entrance to La Garenne ; we entered it to inscribe our names in the visitors' book, and were astonished to find, amid the most enthusiastic admiration of Clisson and its environs, such outbursts of royalist feelings as the book contained : this was the more surprising, as the writers sign not only their names, but addresses also. One had written, "I have been everywhere, and seen everything in beautiful Garenne, but nowhere have I beheld the object of my heart, my beloved Henri V., but he will come soon, I swear it to you." We asked how it

was the police permitted such rampant displays of feeling ; the good man shrugged his shoulders, saying, "At present they begin to speak what they think." He and his wife both amused us with an account of the Emperor's cousin, the Princess B——, which we afterwards heard was by no means exaggerated.

Monsieur Erail (for we asked our cicerone's name) told us that an English family had resided many years at Clisson, which is a bright-looking little town ; they had now left it. Almost wherever we went, we found traces of our countrymen. A good house and garden can be had here for 12*l.* per annum, and all the necessaries of life seem equally reasonable.

It was late before we again entered Nantes, well pleased with our day's excursion. For the benefit of any future traveller who may not wish to take a carriage for the day (which cost twenty-five francs), I may mention, that a diligence starts from Nantes for Clisson every morning, and leaves the latter place in the afternoon, affording ample time to visit everything.

As usual, we arrived next day far too soon at the quay, as the steamer did not start for an hour after its proper time for sailing, and we had to find amusement as we best could under a burning sun, from which our umbrellas even afforded very little protection. The ferry boats here seem to drive a profitable trade, as they were continually passing and re-passing with their freight of passengers, many of them workmen going home for their midday meal. The charge for transit from one bank to the other was not extravagant, being only one sous.

In a few years, when the trees have grown larger, these quays will make pleasant promenades, as they are planted with a magnolia and horse-chesnut alternately. Many of the countrywomen going with us had tall caps bordered with black ribbon, and a bow of the same at the back; some of these caps were made of woollen stuff, like fine flannel, which was very ugly; they are called "calines." We thought at first the black border must mean mourning, but found afterwards it was only the proper cap of

their village; mourning is expressed by letting the bow at the back float down in two long ends.

When the steamer began to fill, we discovered that, notwithstanding all our efforts to get correct information, the boat was not going to St. Na-



LOIRE INFÉRIEURE.

zaire, but to Paimbœuf, which, besides being nine miles from our destination, was on the opposite side of the river. One of the sailors assured us it was quite easy to perform the

passage from Paimbœuf to St. Nazaire, in time to catch the Belle Isle steamer from the latter port; but it was very annoying, after the trouble we had taken, to find that we had been so thoroughly misinformed.

Having heard so much of the beauty of the Loire, we did not like to give up the trip down its waters, or the railway would have been a more expeditious mode of proceeding; so we remained on board, and steamed down the river, expecting every moment to arrive at the beautiful scenery that had lured us on to such inconvenience; but our hopes were destined to disappointment, for anything more utterly tame and insignificant than the muddy banks of tall reeds by which we passed, I never saw. As for scenery, there was none; long stretches of low-lying meadow-land here and there, diversified by a few straggling villages, where we stopped to take in or let out passengers, succeeded each other with unvarying sameness. At length, after nearly three hours of this monotonous travelling, we reached Paimbœuf; and having been directed

by the men on board to secure a boat and cross over to Donges, just opposite, before night, whence we could proceed by the early train next day to St. Nazaire, we commenced our researches for a *canotte* and its crew. First was introduced a tall big man, with a black eye, and an uncertain hesitation in his manner of speaking, which led one to infer that he had been summoned from the nearest *cabaret* to talk to us; my aunt positively declined having anything to do with such a character, and No. 2 was brought forward, an active, energetic little man, who readily promised to convey us and our things to Donges in the shortest possible space of time. I overheard some of the men standing round saying (as, of course, in an idle place like Paimbœuf, a matter of this kind was one of public importance) that it was all very well for Pierre to make bargains, but the *gens d'armes* had forbidden his boat to leave the port. This was no affair of ours, as he had undertaken to perform the voyage; and knowing my aunt's fear of small boats would increase every moment

that was spent in discussion, I was anxious to settle the matter speedily; besides, the twilight was commencing, so we had no time to lose. Pierre went to look after his boat, while we engaged a man to carry our luggage down to the jetty from whence we were to embark. Here we were met by Pierre, who with a rueful face shrugged his shoulders, regretted it extremely, but it was out of his power to gratify us that evening, his boat was unable to quit Paimbœuf, why or wherefore we could not find out.

This was pleasant; what were we to do? Our porter suggested that we should speak to "the English gentleman who was consul there." Lady Leslie, eagerly catching at any suggestion which delayed the dreadful moment of entering an open boat, agreed that he might afford us some assistance, and we adjourned to his house. On the way thither we met him, enjoying his evening walk with his wife and family (he turned out to be the Norwegian consul). Our guide introduced us as ladies in want of advice, and we proceeded to lay the matter before him. He at once offered

to accompany us to the quay, and see what could be arranged. Again our hopes revived at the prospect of seeing Donges that evening, for the difficulties of getting away from Paimbœuf, of course, increased our determination to try every means to accomplish it. Besides, I had a sort of presentiment that unless we crossed the river that night there was but small chance of visiting Belle Isle. Mr. A—— spoke to several of the seamen, and at last fixed on one whom he knew as fit to be trusted; but unfortunately his boat was not quite ready for sea, as the oars and sails were in the village; and while the men went to fetch them we sat down by the lighthouse at the end of the pier. So much time had been expended in deliberation, that it was growing dark. The breeze was freshening, and blowing keen and chilly off the water, which looked cold and dark as it broke in ripples at the foot of the jetty. The lights began to appear at Donges, making the three miles of water that lay between us and that much-desired haven grow longer and more dangerous in the eyes of poor Lady Leslie; while

Mr. A——, who, like all Frenchmen (for he had never seen England, but was a native of Paim-bœuf), had a natural antipathy to water, and everything connected with it, began to suggest there was no real necessity for our departure that evening, and strenuously recommended the comforts of the Hotel Jullien, where he thought we should be much better off than in a little *canotte* crossing the river. Besides, we had luggage, which was always troublesome in the dark, and boats had been lost in the neighbourhood; in fact, two men were drowned the preceding week in making that very passage. Hearing him talk in this doleful strain, Nora and I were quite prepared for the issue, namely, that on the return of the sailors with the boat's appurtenances my aunt's courage fairly gave way, and she declared nothing should induce her to enter on such a dangerous proceeding; so, giving a franc to the men for their trouble, we followed Mr. A—— to the hotel, where he left us, promising to make arrangements for a larger boat to convey us in the morning straight to St. Nazaire, and very kindly saying

he would come again after dinner, and bring the owner of the boat with him. At the hotel we met with a young Norwegian gentleman who could speak both English and French extremely well. He had spent some time in England, and feelingly lamented over the contrast between his residence there and at Paimbœuf, where he was condemned by business to pass the winter, and which he described as *triste* beyond conception. I felt sure he must have a good ear for music from the purity of his accent, and discovered that it was his favourite pursuit; but he could not even hire a piano in the place, so benighted was Paimbœuf. Though formerly a town of much importance to shipping, its prestige has completely passed away before the rising splendour of St. Nazaire, and Paimbœuf is now sinking into dreamy obscurity. About eight o'clock, Mr. A—— entered with his cigar; and having taken a chair, he announced with deliberation, between puffs at the horrid weed, that he had chartered an excellent boat for our use next day; that it was to be kept afloat all night to admit of our starting at seven

A.M., as the passage might take a long time if the wind was not in our favour. To this we willingly acceded, determining to rise at any hour sooner than forego the Belle Isle excursion; and we retired to rest in great spirits. I must say the Hôtel Jullien deserved the praises bestowed on it. It was a most comfortable old house, and many years ago was the most celebrated hotel in this part of France; but it is, of course, included now in the fading fortunes of Paimbœuf.

Next morning dawned grey and misty, and the *bonne* made the pleasant announcement that "it had been blowing all night." But we paid no attention to her forebodings, and impatiently awaited the summons to embark, as the owner of the boat had been told to come and inform us when he was ready for sailing. After waiting an hour, we thought it best to go and look after him; and ordering our luggage to be carried down, we sallied forth to find the boat, in which we were to be conveyed, high and dry on the beach, and no chance of the tide floating her for the next hour. Our hopes sank very low at this mournful

sight, as the steamer for Belle Isle left St. Nazaire at ten o'clock. French people in these out-of-the-way places have no idea of hurrying themselves. If you do miss a steamer or train owing to their dilatoriness, what does it signify? you can go by the next; they are completely apathetic, and will not exert themselves. Mr. A—— and the Norwegian gentleman arrived next on the pier, and after loud discussion amongst the sailors, several of them were set to haul the boat down to the water with twice the needful amount of talking, gesticulating, and clattering of *sabots* (how they managed to run up and down the sloping slippery sides of the pier in those great awkward *sabots*, was most astonishing). This was achieved, and we were at last deposited in it, under the care of one man and a boy, and actually on the road to St. Nazaire. The breeze was in our favour, the sail was strained tight, and we skimmed merrily down the river. Poor Lady Leslie sat gravely in the centre of the boat, looking half reproachfully at Nora, who persisted in declaring this the pleasantest part of the journey,

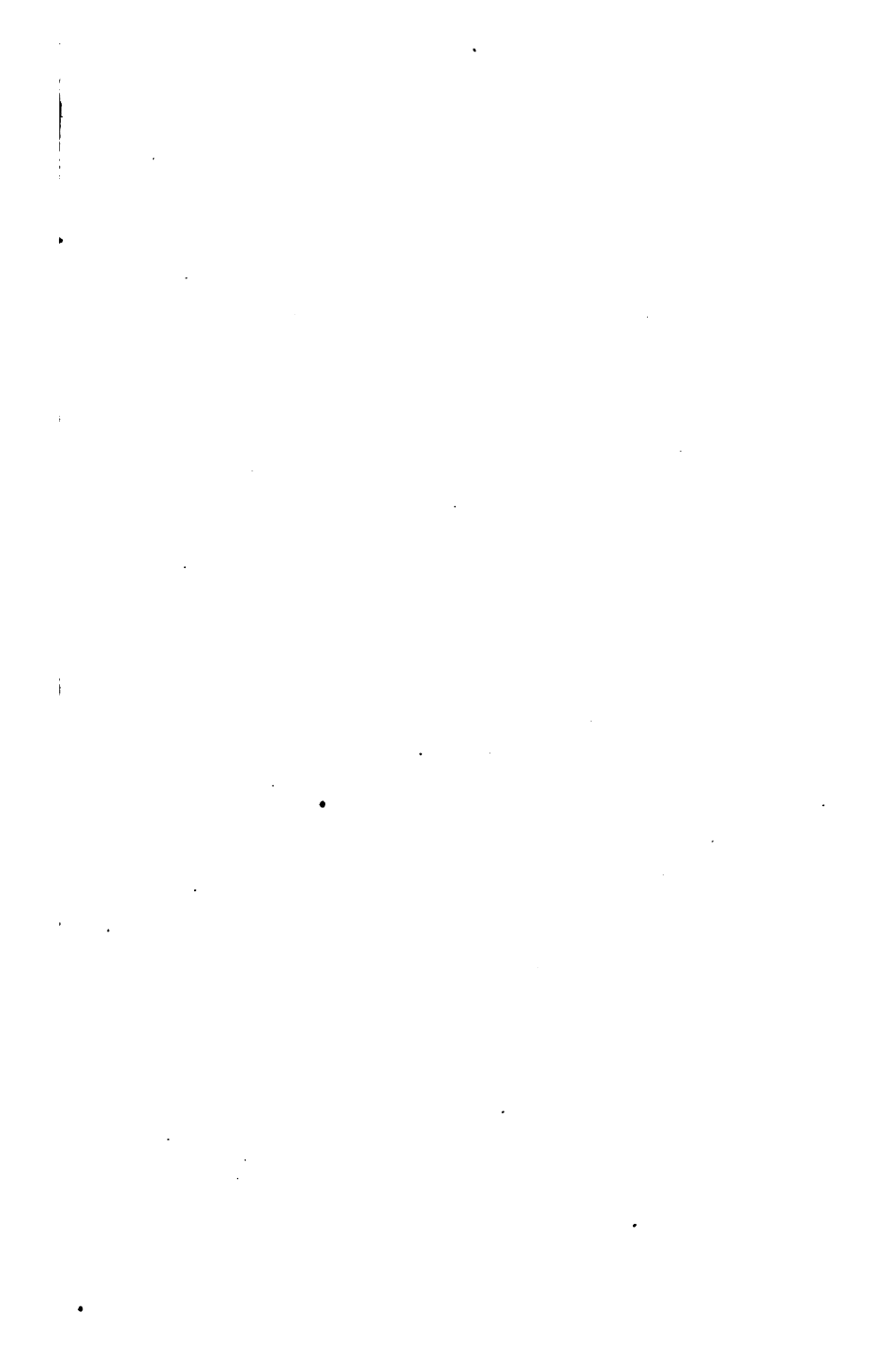
and had the temerity to laugh when a wave, catching us up, made the boat lurch to one side. The boatman told us game abounded on each side of the Loire; and in a hard winter he had often seen this wide sheet of water, some miles across, perfectly white with the quantities of different kinds of sea-birds that were driven there from colder places. There was nothing like winter in the prospect then. The sun beamed out gaily, and our spirits rose under the cheering influence of the lovely morning. After all our troubles and difficulties we were actually approaching the consummation of our wishes; but, alas! the wind slackened; the sail flapped idly; and the little boy declared he saw the train from Nantes entering Donges; by this train we should have completed our journey had we effected the passage to Donges the preceding evening, and for the arrival of this train the steamer waited at St. Nazaire. On approaching the mouth of the Loire, the sea became rougher, and our little craft danced about on the crest of the waves considerably more than my aunt relished, while, saddest sight of all, a line

of dark smoke and a black hull creeping along announced that the Belle Isle steamer had started, and all our exertions were fruitless ; we were too late. St. Nazaire was gained half an hour after the packet had departed, and all chance of Belle Isle was at an end. It was truly vexatious to have come so far out of our way and wasted two days for nothing, as we had now to retrace our steps to Donges, and thence to Vannes.

On inquiring at the railway station, we were told that no train left till four—it was then eleven : we had the whole day to dispose of and nothing to occupy our time. The host at Nantes assured us a day at St. Nazaire was quite sufficient to kill any one with ennui ; however, we were tough enough to survive the infliction. It is a painfully new place, glaring white stones, and dusty roads. We wandered through the town to pass away a few hours ; but the shops are principally stored with articles necessary for the equipment of ships, not at all interesting to ladies in search of employment. No doubt the docks would have repaid investigation, as they are large and fine ; but we were not

learned in such matters, and after visiting the church, which contains nothing very striking beyond two old marble dyptics and a brilliantly gilded and floridly decorated altar, we strolled back to the railway, stopping at a fruit-shop, where large baskets of pears and clusters of grapes were displayed in tempting profusion. All the fruit sold here is brought from Nantes, as none is grown near St. Nazaire, the land around which is singularly flat and sandy. Ground is still very cheap in the neighbourhood, and it would be rather a good speculation to invest in some, as this port is a special *protégé* of the Emperor, who came to preside in person at the opening of the docks. Ships from all countries put in here, and on trim-looking schooners we read familiar English names; but the greater number of vessels were Swedish and Norwegian. These two nations have consuls everywhere throughout Brittany; however small the town might be, there was sure to be a Swedish and Norwegian consul in it. Near the station we caught sight of a small Druids temple, or dolmen, and determined that it would be much pleasanter

to discuss our fruit under shelter of its time-honoured remains than in the trim modern railway office. So Nora and I started to find our way to it, leaving Lady Leslie, who was too tired to accompany us, at the station. The temple is very small, what French people call a *trilithé*, one horizontal and two upright stones: some prostrate ones half-imbedded in turf, seemed to say the monument had once been larger; it stood in a field where some oxen were grazing,—they looked astonished at our presumption in invading their territory, as we sat down on the fallen stones,—one was especially curious to investigate us, advancing slowly nearer and nearer, to the extreme jeopardy of the beautiful duchesse pear I was peeling; for had the animal ventured a few paces nearer I should certainly have beat a precipitate retreat. We lingered about the dolmen till we thought our aunt might be anxious for our return, and then we had to perform the feat of crossing the field in front of the five oxen. Nora, who was not afraid of them, walked boldly past, but one of the creatures came right in the very path I wanted to follow; fortu-





RUINS OF A CHURCH AT DONGES.

nately the bank was easy of access, so I quitted the field by a different route.

The country between St. Nazaire and Donges is one flat deserted-looking tract of land, with but few signs of habitation. At Donges we had to wait an hour for the diligence that was to take us to La Roche Bernard *en route* to Vannes. Near the station stands a picturesque ruined chapel, which the people round declared to have been in the same state for a hundred years. The parish church has a quaint high-peaked roof, and looks old; but has no distinctive marks about it. When the diligence arrived it took some little time to arrange the number of people that were to be accommodated. I should think in the *intérieure* they must have had rather a lively time of it judging from the noise made by six young children, who all went for nothing.

The horses were thin, scraggy creatures, but very spirited; one little animal stood on its hind legs, and pawed the air vigorously, much to my aunt's horror; when once started he went as steadily to his work as possible; but whenever

we stopped the same playful little scene was enacted.

Our driver, a most energetic man, seemed to have messages and parcels for nearly every house on the road, and was perpetually off his box ; but after my aunt had implored him not to leave the horses alone, he very goodnatureedly unfastened the traces every time he went away and put on the drag, assuring her that though they really were as quiet as lambs, they could not now do any damage, as the "*mécanique* would hold us like a rock." We left Donges at six P.M., and, though the horses went very fast, it was nine before we reached La Roche, where the hotel looked so dirty and uncomfortable that we tried hard to continue our journey to Vannes at once ; but, as the diligence only passed at midnight, and it was extremely uncertain whether we could obtain places, we were compelled to wait till the morning, and hire a carriage for ourselves. Our request for dinner seemed rather to inconvenience the household : first, the *salon* had to be cleared of a party of farmers ; when our repast was served it certainly did not lack butter

in its composition, as each dish was floating in yellow grease. However, when the bill was brought in next morning, showing a total of eleven francs for three dinners, breakfasts, and rooms, we were not surprised at the roughness of the household arrangements.

While the horses were being harnessed we took a short walk to the river's bank, to see the handsome suspension bridge across our old friend the Vilaine (so called, it is said, from the ugly colour of its waters; however, the banks are very pretty, quite refreshing after the flat, uninteresting Loire). This bridge is erected at the height of 120 feet above the water. La Roche takes its name from a huge rock jutting into the river, which at this point is of considerable width.

My aunt was rather alarmed at the sight of our conductor, a little boy not more than ten years old; but she was assured that he performed the journey continually, and he certainly seemed on the best possible understanding with his steeds, a pair of spirited ponies, for they were really too small to be entitled to the name of horses.

Nothing satisfied our young Jehu but galloping ; and if the animals subsided into a trot, for any smaller reason than a stiff hill, they were immediately admonished of their duty. How that child's arms must have ached ! We often looked back on those ponies as the most miraculous animals we had ever encountered. Thirty miles had the poor things to go before reaching Vannes, and I heard the boy telling a friend who came to greet him, that he should return that evening to La Roche ; and true enough, about six o'clock I saw him departing, and the indefatigable little ponies trotting merrily away.

Our first inquiry, on alighting at the Hôtel du Commerce, was the direction of the post-office, to which we adjourned immediately, but were grievously disappointed at finding no letters ; from thence we proceeded to the cathedral, which is so surrounded and built up with houses that it is difficult to tell what the exterior may be, but the doorway and nave belong to the sixteenth century. There is a modern altar to the Virgin, a most frightful mixture of gilded clouds and Grecian pillars.

The late king gave some very good pictures to the cathedral ; a lovely Charity, by Govie, and an exquisite Madonna and Child, by Delaval. Numbers of country people were kneeling before their favourite shrines, and all the confessionals were full, being Friday, their usual day for confessing ; however, at the *table d'hôte*, very few people thought of fasting.

The amount of Roman bricks, tiles, and pieces of pottery found in the neighbourhood, as well as in the immediate precincts of Vannes, proves it to have been a town of some importance with the Romans ; as usual, the archæologists differ in opinion as to whether some remains in the neighbourhood claim their descent from the Druids or the Romans. Are they temples or camps ? A question always being debated without any hope of a final decision.

The cemetery contains a remarkably handsome stone cross, with curious figures sculptured thereon, its base ornamented by bundles of sticks and crutches of every shape and size ; so long have some of them lain there, that the brambles

have twined round them in thick clusters. Facing the cross is a large tomb surmounted by a kneeling figure of a priest ; this tomb ap-



CROSS AT VANNES.

peared to be a mark for special adoration, as one after another came and knelt in prayer at its foot. Behind the monument was erected a

kind of screen, covered with nails, from which were suspended various articles of baby attire, small wax legs, arms, heads, some few entire dolls, and innumerable little bags filled with something, we could not make out what. I asked a poor woman, who was begging at the gate, for a solution of the mystery; she said the cross was very holy, parents came and took ground from the foot of it, part of which they put in a small bag and hung on the screen, the rest they carried home and applied to any child suffering from fever; the crutches and sticks had once been the property of lame people, who by prayer at this shrine had gone away cured, leaving their now useless assistants as votive offerings, while the numerous garments fluttering in the breeze belonged to children who had either been relieved, or were still in want of it, by intercession at this all-powerful cross.

The cemetery was thickly planted over with magnolias and cypress trees. Almost all the graves were marked by wooden crosses, painted white, and enlivened by colossal tears in black trickling

down them ; there were but few stone tablets, but many tombs were adorned with crowns, made of black and white beads, and images of the Virgin, in plaster ; some few had flowers planted on them, but the favourite ornament was evidently the bead crown, which generally had a hand-glass over it to protect it from the injurious effects of the weather.

Behind the cemetery lies a pile of Roman remains, principally bricks, which have been excavated in draining the town. Lovers of Wordsworth will not fail to find out the college here, in which was nurtured that warlike spirit "which glorified the truant youth of Vannes" in the end of Napoleon's reign, when all the collegians, leaving their studies, joined their Chouan countrymen and took up arms for their lawful king, and, notwithstanding their tender years, covered themselves with undying glory. All their exploits are detailed in a book called, "*La petite Chouannerie*," which reads like a legend, but has the stamp of truth on it.

Notwithstanding the number of Druidical re-

mains we had seen, we had never yet met with a sacrificial altar; but finding there were several within a short distance of Vannes, we followed the route indicated by our guide-book, and taking the road to Pontivy until we came in sight of three windmills, we soon arrived at an open heath, where two large masses of rock attracted our attention; in them are large holes, *cuvettes*, apparently scooped out, and by some said to have been intended for the reception of the blood shed at Druidical sacrifices, whence little channels conducted it to the ground. Monsieur Fouqué holds strongly to this opinion, saying, that had the atmosphere any effect on the rock it would have rendered it convex instead of concave, as the edges would have been the first to crumble away. But other archæologists declare, that sacrifices were always performed on the large slabs of stone, forming the roof of a dolmen, and the murdered victim was buried under the sacred place. It is just such a point as antiquarians would delight to fight over; but I should think the proper place to study the

cuvette question in all its bearings would be on those huge stones left in such fantastic shapes on the Asiatic Mount Olympus. As they were the first I ever saw of the kind, perhaps my memory may exaggerate their size; still they must be much larger than anything we saw in Brittany, and the number of *cuvettes* to be seen on them was endless. I suppose they were Druidical remains, or at least memorials of some faith as old as Druidism.

There are some pleasant excursions to be made in the neighbourhood of Vannes; to one of them we had long looked forward, viz. the Abbey of St. Gildas, in which Abelard spent a portion of his days, menaced by the unruly monks, from whom he at last effected his escape. As it required a long day to accomplish this expedition, we managed to start by half-past eight, and confided ourselves to the charge of our driver in the belief that he had been fully instructed as to where we were to be taken, for as the ruined castle of Sucinio lay but a short distance out of our way, we meant to take it on our road. Our

driver was quite a lad, and of a taciturn disposition; his whole mind seemed engrossed in watching the progress of his dog, a large black animal, and the greatest coward I ever saw; it carefully retreated to the other side of the carriage on the approach of any member of the canine race, and howled vigorously if one ventured near him.

As the map represented the sea coming close up to the town of Vannes, we could not understand the long stretches apparently of pasture land, till a nearer inspection proved what we had taken for grass to be the seaweed *Enteromorpha*. The tide being out, no water was to be seen. A quantity of this seaweed was laid by way of manure on the fields, without undergoing the usual preparation of burning. Every now and then we passed square pits for making salt, and numbers of tall factories, where the manufacture was completed.

It was market day at Vannes, and we encountered crowds of peasants, leading cows, &c., and for the first time met women riding like men. I must, however, observe, that it was only amongst

the elderly members of the sex that this preference for comfort to appearance was testified.

After driving quietly on for an hour, Nora inquired of the lad how much farther we had to go, and discovered that he had no idea of the whereabouts of Sucinio, and meant simply to conduct us to St. Gildas; of course we were not going to be deprived of a part of our expedition, and insisted on his asking the way from the country people round, and constantly referring to our guide-book, we turned up a small lane close to the château of Kerlevenan; this lane was in a very primitive state of repair, and as it did not improve on further acquaintance, my aunt declined to trust herself any longer in the carriage, but proceeded on foot, wondering how we could run the risk of being upset, which, however, we preferred to the long walk that lay before us, for though the castle at times appeared close to us, the apology for a road wound in and out for a considerable distance; when we did reach the few dirty cottages that stand round the ruins, some little boys ran out, and were most officious in re-

questing to carry shawls or baskets, and to act as guides.

The castle of Sucinio stands on a slightly raised piece of ground facing the sea. It was originally built in the thirteenth century, but many parts are of later date; the doorway is of the fifteenth century, and above it on a shield, supported by two stags, are emblazoned the ermines of Brittany. In the tower, on the right hand, can be seen the remains of a handsome decorated window, said to have belonged to the chapel inside. The courtyard is overgrown with elder bushes, which were laden with ripe fruit; we suggested to our small attendants the use these berries might be put to in the manufacture of wine, which they certainly never had heard of before, and were duly astonished thereat. At the other end of the court, opposite the principal entrance, stands the most modern part of the château: here still remains in one of the towers a winding staircase, by which you may ascend to the top and walk along the ruined battlements. It seems a positive desecration to have added aught to the ravages committed by

time, but the present owner of the castle has torn down the principal staircase, and actually sold the stones ; he has now built himself a brilliantly new residence near Sarzeau. Sucinio belonged in old times to the Dukes of Brittany. In 1243, Alix, daughter of Jean I. and Blanche of Champagne, was born here ; she married when eleven years old Jean Comte de Blois ; they began life early in those days, for we find Alix's daughter married at the age of nine.

Here, as at many other places, we found that the frenzy for handing the name of a visitor down to future ages was *not* confined to the English nation, as all available pieces of wall were scored with French and some few Italian and Spanish names ; many were cut in the stone with a tolerable amount of care, and nearly half bore the Christian names of ladies.

The castle is surrounded by a deep moat, now overgrown with flags and brambles ; at the foot of the towers on the outer side are many openings for cannon, with which the lower story must have been fortified. An old man in the village came

up as we were preparing to leave, and told us his father had seen the castle in its palmy days of prosperity, when it was still a place of importance, and had its long retinue of retainers, and its band of armed men.

Sarzeau, through which we passed, contains nothing of note, except a Roman pillar, which is to be seen in the churchyard. It was in this little village that Alain René Le Sage, the celebrated author of *Gil Blas*, was born in 1668.

We now entered on a long dusty tract of road, which seemed almost interminable, but at last ended in the church and convent of St. Gildas. We visited first the church, of which the greater part belongs to the 12th century ; at the entrance stands a huge *bénitier*, formed of the capital of a pillar ; behind the altar is an ancient stone tomb, said to contain the body of the renowned St. Gildas, whose fame is spread far and wide throughout Brittany. We had been told especially to remark some curious silver relics, but, being unable to find them, we addressed ourselves to some women who were cleaning the church ; one of them

shook her head, pointing to her companion, who came forward to explain in French, that her friend could only understand Breton. She seemed at a loss to understand what we wanted to see, but a sudden light dawning upon her mind, she hastily led the way to the vestry, and with great pride opened some large cupboards, displaying amid flower-pots of tawdry flowers, &c. the relics we had asked for; one is a silver mitre belonging to the fifteenth century, another is a curiously worked arm and hand in metal, resembling silver; all down the arm are small pieces of glass, through which you see that the case contains the arm-bones of the great St. Gildas; on his *fête* day these relics are placed on the high-altar, and then carried in procession round the church. The guardian of these treasures was quite overpowered at the receipt of a small gratuity, which she at first wished to decline, but wisely changing her mind accepted, and clattered back to the church in her noisy *sabots*, to inform her fellow-worker of the advantage derived from being conversant with two languages. From the church there is but a step

to the door of the convent, which we requested permission to enter. A rosy looking nun invited us into the *parloir*, while she went to prefer our request to the higher authorities. The *parloir* was a somewhat dreary apartment, containing no furniture save a few chairs; the walls were adorned with lugubrious prints, representing the good offices performed by the *Sœurs de Charité* (or rather, *Filles de Dieu*, as they are called) to the sick and wounded. We could not think whence the peculiar sickening smell of a chemist's shop arose, till Nora looking through a glass door discovered a perfect array of druggists' bottles, together with a large display of weights and measures; for the nuns are the doctors of the neighbourhood.

We were presently accosted by a cheerful old lady, who volunteered most willingly to show us over the establishment; notwithstanding her nun's dress she soon evinced a very womanly curiosity to know what was going on in the outer world, and eagerly inquired if it was true that war had again broken out in China, from the discussion of which point she rapidly and easily glided off into

a mournful strain touching the loss of a knitting-needle, a loss not easily replaced in this out of the way part of the world. Her ideas were chiefly centred on the capabilities of the convent for receiving boarders during the summer months. Families often came from Paris even she said, for a month or two of quiet and sea-bathing, and she proudly ushered us into the *salle*, where the boarders took their meals; the lady boarders only, as gentlemen of course were not admitted, and any who came with their families were accommodated in a detached house. Round the walls of this *salle à manger* hung some exquisite little oval miniatures, all portraits of members of the founder's family; one in particular had a most lovely face, her hair powdered, and dressed over a high cushion, from which a lace veil fell in soft folds on her neck. After looking at her lustrous blue eyes, and piquant nose and mouth, you did not wonder that each morning when her carriage appeared it was surrounded and followed by many an eager aspirant for the honour of a word, or even a glance from those speaking eyes. *Ma mère* declared that

the young lady's mother was thankful when her daughter married, as the train of adorers was anything but convenient.

Above the miniatures were suspended some prints of sacred subjects, which the old nun evidently thought far more deserving of notice than the very worldly, though beautiful Madame de ——. We went into the nuns' refectory, a dull-looking room, the only objects for contemplation being a crucifix and a print of St. Catherine over the fire-place. It was the same in their work-room, where rows of chairs were placed facing the same objects. The old lady insisted on taking us upstairs, to see the rooms appropriated to the *pensionnaires*, which opened out of a wide corridor, looking on to the little courtyard, gay with autumn flowers; such bright, clean rooms, the windows open to the sea-breeze, which swept fresh and clear through them. The nun said their terms were one hundred francs per month for each boarder, and launched forth largely on the liberal table they kept, and the price the unfeeling country people made them

pay for veal, mutton, &c. knowing they were forced to buy the articles, however expensive. Having shown us all over the inhabited portion of the convent, she at length proceeded to the part where stood the remains of the former monastery. Just as we were entering, with eagerness befitting the spot we were to visit, she turned abruptly off, to ask a workman if he had seen the lost needle which was so deeply regretted. "Had it been small, I could easily have replaced it; but, alas! it was such a fine one, so long; they are not to be had here;" and, still murmuring about her lost treasure, *Ma mère* quitted us in search of it, and left us standing within the few ruined walls which alone remain of the abbey where poor Abelard fought single-handed against the spirit of disorder which reigned in the monastery, and enraged the rebellious monks so much that they tried to murder him. Fortunately he escaped from their fury by a little gate in the garden, which is now closed up. The convent-garden was large and well stocked; and on asking if we could get any fruit, a handsome dark-eyed nun,

Sœur Jeanne, instantly appeared with some splendid pears. She kept the account of all fruit vegetables sold, as each sister had her own department.

There is a pretty little wood off the garden, tangled and wild, though so small. It is a great boon to the nuns, who go there with their work during the hours of recreation. We came upon a large group sitting on the ground, busy knitting or spinning. They never raised their heads to look at us as we passed. I suppose it is only etiquette for the *supérieures* of the convent to be interested in anything beyond their own walls. One side of the wood is bounded by the sea; and in a corner lies a small enclosure of green turf, with a simple stone cross in the centre. This is the last quiet resting-place of the sisters. No tomb-stone marks each grave: all are equal here. They rest under the shadow of those trees where in life they had so often walked; their sole monument the cross where they had so often knelt; and the ceaseless murmur of the waves their only dirge,—a simpler and a nobler requiem

than ever pealed from human choir. *Ma mère* pointed it out to us with quiet satisfaction; and added, that she felt a sure trust that all who looked to the Cross alone for salvation would find security and peace. We were surprised to hear such liberal sentiments from a Roman Catholic, but she was naturally of too gentle and refined a temperament ever to become a bigot.

We were quite sorry to leave the quiet wood; with its restless neighbour the bright dancing sea, the peaceful sisters leading their monotonous lives, it seemed a very garden of enchantment; everything wore an air of calm security. The very birds and animals about the place were tame even with strangers. *Ma mère* was evidently an object of great affection to the four-footed and feathered members of the community. The watchdog, who had heralded our approach with barks and angry growls, now changed his warlike demonstrations to submissive entreaties for caresses, and grotesque capers of delight; the hens and ducks came running forward in expectation of crumbs, which *ma mère* always kept in store in

her pocket, as she could not disappoint the poor things; and when we went to see the house set apart for families, a cat ran out, and clamorously demanded attention. *Ma mère* commiserated her sad fate greatly, always shut up in that house, for the corn and hay being stored there during the winter season, a cat was needful to keep the rats and mice at bay. "But I always take her meals every day, poor thing," said the good old nun. She was quite grieved, when, after leaving a few francs for the benefit of her poor charges in the village, we prepared to take our leave, and shook hands with us, again and again repeating how much she had always liked Scotch people, and that we had interested her greatly; that, though we might never meet on earth, she would pray that we might do so hereafter; and with many good wishes we passed through the gateway, and bade farewell to the convent of St. Gildas.

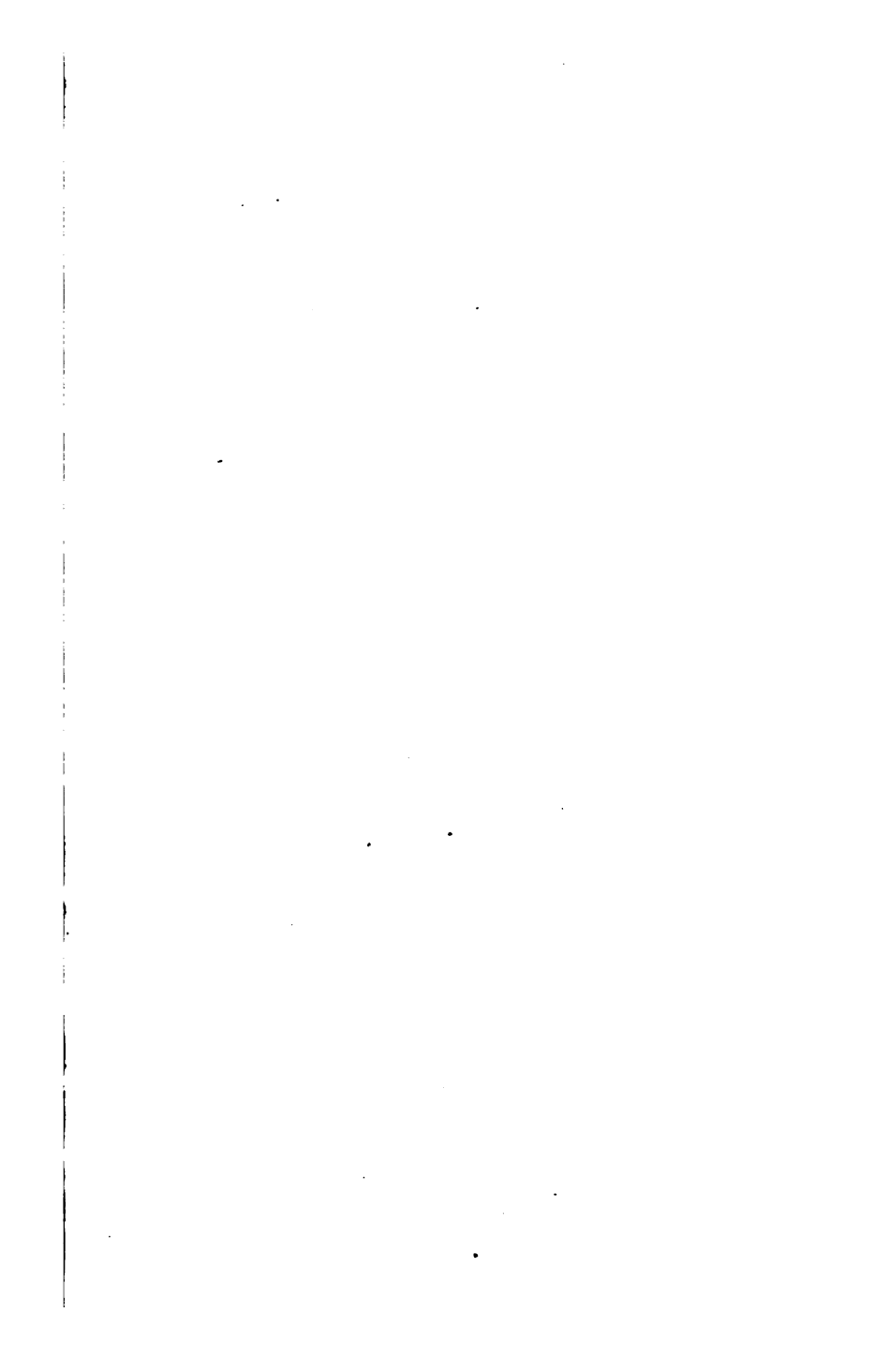
I climbed up a gorse-covered bank to get a sketch of the convent, and disturbed a good sized snake, who rustled away very much surprised at the unwonted appearance of a stranger. Of course I

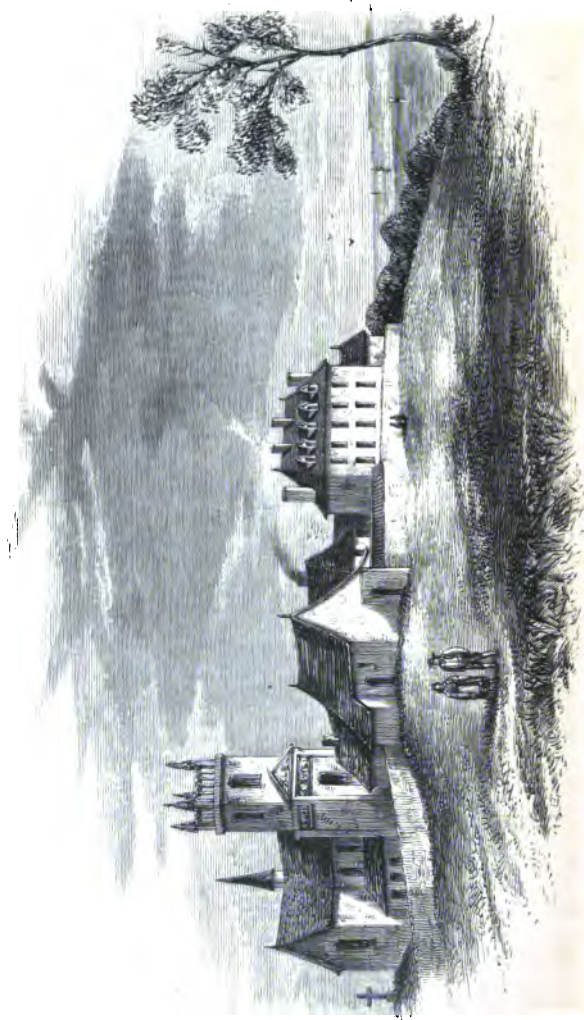
retired also at once, but finding no other spot so promising, I returned after a few moments, and found the snake,—having, apparently, come to the same conclusion,—just taking possession of his old nest.

In the village, the women were all bruising the flax, preparatory to steeping and putting it through the various needful stages prior to its being spun into thread, a work generally reserved for the long winter evenings.

Our homeward drive lay along the borders of the sea, and the tide being full, made a considerable change for the better in the landscape. The salt pits were hidden, and the manufactories, surrounded by water, stood isolated, like sentinels guarding the mainland. It was quite dark before we regained our hotel, well tired out with our long expedition.

M. Souvestre, in his “*Derniers Bretons*,” says, that on the borders of the sea, near St. Gildas, wicked fishermen, who think nothing of the salvation of their souls, are sometimes roused at night by three taps on the door from an invisible hand ;





CHURCH AND CONVENT OF ST. GILDAS.

compelled by a supernatural force, they go down to the beach, where black boats, seemingly empty, but sunk to the brim in the water, await them ; as they enter, a large white sail hoists itself at the mast, and the bark leaves the shore as if borne onwards by a rapid current. These boats never reappear, and the fishermen are condemned to wander about the ocean till the day of judgment shall release them.

On the Ile d'Artz are sometimes seen tall white women walking on the sea from neighbouring islands. They come and seat themselves, sad and bowed down, on the shore, scooping out the sand with their naked feet, or picking off the leaves of the rosemary sprigs in their hands. These women are daughters of the island, who have married elsewhere, and dying far from their native soil, in a state of sin, return to claim the prayers of their relatives.

Sometimes in the long winter nights, when the wind sweeps howling over the waters, the wives of the island, whose husbands are at sea, awake to hear the sad and monotonous sound of falling

water at the foot of their beds. Scared and terrified, they rise, and should there be no visible appearance of moisture, it is a sure and certain sign of shipwreck, and the sea has made them widows.

From Vannes we determined to go to Ploërmel, of operatic celebrity, and went to secure seats in the diligence for that place. We were told it passed through Vannes at five o'clock. I could not help an exclamation at the uncomfortably early hour. "Yes," said the man, shutting up his book, "it arrives here at five, and will start again in half an hour; the fare is six francs. But may I ask, Mademoiselle, why you should wish to go to Ploërmel?" "Why, I go to see all that is to be seen," I replied. "But there is nothing, absolutely nothing, to be seen there; it is a miserable place, *triste* in the extreme, and the hotels are wretched." This was not promising, and Lady Leslie looked blank. I represented that the church was very celebrated, and besides, the forest of King Arthur was near it (where is the Breton who has not heard of King

Arthur?). The man shrugged his shoulders, and said "there might be a forest, but as for a church—" "Nevertheless," said a *conducteur* standing by, "it is true there are sculptures in the church, for I have seen them." This was reviving, so we returned to the diligence. "If we were determined to go, he would put our names down, but could not promise places till the time came." And with this unsatisfactory conclusion, we left the good man repeating to himself, "It was the first time he had ever heard that there was anything to see at Ploërmel, and it was only *les Anglais* who ever did things of that sort: at the same time, it was a creditable kind of taste, he must allow, though extraordinary."

We packed our bags overnight, and ordered chocolate to be ready at five next morning, at which hour we descended, and found the long tables spread, and the waiters standing about, napkin in hand, just as if they had been there all night. No matter at what hour you rise in a French hotel, some one is sure to be down before

you. We were at once greeted by the intelligence that the diligence had come in quite full, so our early rising was useless; but as we were up at that unearthly hour, it was necessary to get on somehow, and after a little inquiry, a *voiturier* presented himself who had come in from Ploërmel with a party of priests to assist at a *retraite*, and would be delighted to take us back for twenty francs, eleven leagues. Accordingly we packed ourselves again into one of those baker's cart looking machines, and started on rather a miserable drive, as the rain came down in torrents, and the leather curtains being a most inefficient protection (of course they were all out of order), we were obliged to have recourse to umbrellas. The road passes by Elven, where stands the ruined Château de Largouët,* which possesses a large octagon tower, about which the learned have had many disputes. Is it the twelfth or sixteenth century architecture? or did it belong to the Seigneurs of Malestroit or De Rieux (the tutor of Anne of Brittany)? About

* Our Henry VII. was imprisoned for some months in this château.

its age I can be no judge, but as on a ruined chimney-piece may still be seen a shield bearing ten bezants, the De Rieux arms, it seems as if, in an age when heraldry was a science, that fact ought to stamp its proprietorship. We stopped at Serunt to rest the horses, and remained for two hours in an *auberge* of rather lower pretensions than any we had yet seen. In the first place, the horses walked into the front door and through the hall with us, on their way to the stables; then you had to pick your steps carefully, as the good people of the house were clearing out the courtyard, and several dirty heaps were piled round the front door, making it a dangerous thing to step in or out carelessly. The landlady, a stout, fresh-coloured, independent dame, with the neatest possible little crimped cap, told us we could have anything we liked, but refused to suggest anything; she was ready to take fire at the slightest provocation, though perfectly polite and willing to talk. I have no doubt, had we not been very civil to her, she would have refused to give us the coffee we ordered, as being the safest thing to ask for. It

was served at once, in the most exquisite manner, and in the brightest little tin pans. I do not believe it would have been half so nice at Meurice's. The only inhabitant of the *salon* was the wife of a Strasbourgh merchant, travelling with a stock of cutlery, who spent nine months every year in Brittany, and returned home for the winter. Some more people coming in, the mid-day meal was served—a most comfortable dinner, well cooked, and neatly served. Nora and I were cold, and begged leave to go and sit by the kitchen fire, where we found an immense wide chimney, and seats on each side quite into the “ingle nook.” It would be impossible, on a winter's night, to help relating stories round such a fire. The floor was mud, and very uneven, yet there was a handsome polished wardrobe and press-bed. Most of the cooking went on in the back kitchen, and as we had drunk our coffee, it did not much signify, but the girl was standing *sabot* deep in a dark-coloured slush, doubtless the collection of many days; yet her cap, like her mistress's, was brilliantly white, and she brought

roast partridges done to a turn, and tempting looking stews out of that mysterious room; and after all, what had the floor to do with the cooking? Our hostess told us game was plentiful, and very cheap; woodcocks, partridges, and hares, as many as they cared to have. She said, also, that mushrooms abounded, but she only liked to use the red kind. They seldom saw any English travellers, but there were tin mines in the neighbourhood worked by Englishmen, two of whom had gone to California and made fabulous fortunes.

Brittany seems to have been always celebrated for mineral wealth. In the reign of Jean V. there were mines of silver, worked by Germans, who had certain privileges of taking wood for their work without paying for it. They seem to have abused their rights, for some of the nobles petitioned against them, and their privileges were modified.

The spire of Serunt church leans so very much to one side, that you expect the least breath of wind must throw it over; but as the Strasbourgh merchant said he had passed regularly for twenty-

five years, without observing any difference in its position, I suppose it will last some time yet. There are some old tombs near this, in which were found ashes and bones. At Roc St. André is a very good bridge; and beside it a large rock, named La Contentaine. On its summit is a little chapel; and the view from it is so fine, that it is a common saying in the country,—“If you are not content, go to La Contentaine.” The lovely landscape is supposed to be a cure for all troubles.

As we approached Ploërmel, the country became very 'pretty—hilly and wooded. We told our driver to take us to the best hotel in the place; on which the honest man said,—“I keep a hotel, but I will not tell you it is the best. Still people are very well at my house. However, the best is the Lion d'Or, and there I will take you.” So we were put down at the Lion d'Or, a quiet, old-fashioned hotel, quite the best in Ploërmel, and possessing the great advantage of being close to the church. From a back staircase, leading outside the house to some of the bed-

rooms, you have a quiet, uninterrupted view of its mossy and mouldering carvings. (There is a very dirty courtyard at your feet ; but in Brittany you soon cease to observe such minor circumstances.) As soon as we had taken possession of our rooms, we ran out to have a nearer look at it. The rain had fortunately spent itself, and we stood ankle deep in mud, to the great edification of a few remaining market-people, gazing unweariedly. This church was finished in 1556. It is very rich in detail, and peculiar in form. The gargoyles are very eccentric—snaky dragons, with ducks' feet, howling monks, and scaly monsters of all kinds. But it is at the north door you stand entranced ; for here the architect has concentrated his genius, and the whole gable end is covered with a profusion of detail that is perfectly bewildering. This is one of those "rare fronts of varied mosaic, covered with imagery wilder and quainter than ever filled a *Midsummer Night's Dream*," of which Ruskin speaks. Every stone has its separate story, and you can spend hours in tracing out their grotesque and fanciful meanings. Here

is a hideous, distorted monkey playing on a bagpipe, which some one has picked out with pink chalk, as being, in his opinion, *the* stone of the building; then a graceful mermaid dances jauntily over a prostrate centaur, who is lying doubled back with astonishment, as he well may be; two twin children are two or three times repeated; inside one window I counted thirty figures; all round the gable edge are carved in bold relief against the sky, fabulous snakes with their tails in their mouths. Inside the church are some lovely painted windows, but unfortunately for us, they were in Paris being cleaned and repaired. The beams are grotesquely carved, and you see the marble statues of Jean II. and Jean III. reposing on the same tomb; but there is nothing inside to detain you. You will return again, as we did, to the contemplation of that wondrous door, and excite the unmitigated amazement of the town boys, who gaze from you back to the doors, and ask each other what it is the strangers are looking at. The appearance of my little sketch book instantly called forth the offer of chairs

from two or three houses, if I wished to sketch the church, but I was not presumptuous enough to attempt anything of the kind. Photography alone could do it any justice, and even then, so many of the stones have mouldered away, that it requires some imagination to restore them to their pristine beauty. I only transferred two or three of the most goblin-like gurgoyles to my book, and we left, wishing that some kind of glass protection from the weather might be invented for the whole of that wall, in order that some lingering remains at least of its beauty might be spared to the next generation. The country people always say, "You gave us that church—the English built it for us ;" and I think they still retain a sort of kindness for the nation who left their town such an ornament.

There is a large monastery here; and the church being open to every one, we presented ourselves at the door, and asked for admittance, which a surly old monk was just refusing, when a little boy standing by declared anybody might go in, so we entered. It is quite a new church, with a very light carved wooden altar, and lovely angels

on it, and a large copy of the frightful N. D. de la Salette. The church possesses also the relics, in a waxen figure, of St. Felissimé, its patron saint. Three galleries at the end belong to the monks ; and they were continually filled with brothers coming in for a few moments' devotion. One monk, evidently in a dying state, sat there without altering his position, or changing his expression, but gazing with unseeing eyes towards the altar, as if he were already a disembodied spirit. It was the eve of their *fête* day—the greatest day in the year—and the whole establishment was in a frantic state of excitement ; brothers running about with silver cups in their hands ; workmen busy erecting an avenue of posts, thickly studded with coloured lamps, in front of St. Felissimé ; and the bishop just arriving, we thought we must be in the way, and went back to the hotel, where we were instantly asked, “ Did you see the clock, or the gardens ? ”

“ No ; the old monk at the gate appeared to dislike our going in at all ; and as they all seemed very busy, we left.”

“ Oh, it is only that Père Jerome, the imbecile. But you must go back to look at the clock : every one goes to see it.”

And the good old hostess directed one of her daughters to go with us. A rosy, handsome girl came forward, with great alacrity, delighted to have an opportunity of worrying the sleepy brothers, most of whom she knew by name, and had a standing feud with some of them, especially the surly porter, to whom she had played a trick two years before, which the cross old man had never forgiven :—“in fact, ever since then, he detests me.”

We humbly requested leave at the lodge to see the gardens ; and a meek, quiet brother was despatched to show them. Père Jerome attempted again to interfere, but was waved off by Mademoiselle, who marched past him, saying, “ But I do not understand you.” The gardens are large, and well stocked, and full of shady walks. A little grave-yard at one end had many wooden crosses in it. Some orders do not allow any distinctive mark to be put over their dead ; but

here each one had a name and a cross. The monastery, into which of course we were not admitted, seems very large, and capable of holding several hundred people. The brothers are sent on missions to all parts of the world; and on the occasion of their *retraite* fifteen hundred or two thousand collect together. A school of six hundred children is attached to the building, and everything wanted is made by monks. They made the machinery of their large windmills, and they also carved their lovely wooden altar. Our vivacious companion said the angels' wings on it were in much too pointed a *pose*, which gave them more the air of bad spirits than angels.

"*Ma fille*," calmly replied the meek guide, "you speak thus, because you do not understand drawing. You ought to understand the angels are supposed to be just alighting; were they ascending, their wings would be more spread."

Mademoiselle shrugged her shoulders, but was not convinced, and begged to see the clock. The poor monk, who was evidently dying to get back to his *fête* preparations, wished to ignore the

clock ; but Mademoiselle insisted on his fetching the key ; so he submitted, and went for it. No wonder the brothers dreaded the entrance of this wilful and perverse spirit into their quiet domain. However, the clock was really wonderful. You enter a room quite full of machinery : it is most dangerous to move. The clock has ten dial-plates. It tells the time in all parts of the world, the equations, the tides, solstices—all sorts of things, besides setting in motion a complete celestial system. The wheels, weights—in fact, everything except the enamel dial-plates, were made in the monastery. It took the monk who shows it, and two assistants, two years to finish it ; and now he cannot tell you why he made it, or how it came so. He points you out the different dials, but is quite thrown out if you ask him an unexpected question. He is a little white-haired old man, who, from long practice, can slip in and out among the machinery like an eel, and expects you to follow him under weights and round corners that were certainly never contemplated by your milliner. He was so anxious for us to hear his

clock strike, that he sounded the *angelus* nearly half an hour too soon, thereby, no doubt, throwing the whole monastery into dire confusion. As we left, the monks were all hurrying about, and Mademoiselle said, "Whenever people ask me the manufactures of Ploërmel, I tell them, *ma foi*, we manufacture nothing here but brothers, and of those we turn out a great many every year." Nearly all the monks she classed as *bête*, but among the number were a few with talent, and even genius, to which rare class belonged the old man who made the clock. Of course we inquired carefully about the "Pardon of Ploërmel," made famous just now in civilized circles by the opera of that name, but were assured there never had been a Pardon there at all; many travellers had come asking about the Pardon, but it was a mistake. Mademoiselle thought that the opera alluded to the world-famous pilgrimage of St. Anne, but the composer did not like to take the real name. I think the euphony of the alliteration attracted him. It almost seems as if the long occupation of Ploërmel by the English had

given it a grave caste, a reflex of our national character; but certainly they have no Pardon or *fête* of any kind; and even their markets are conducted with gravity and decorum; whereas Josselin, though so near, is essentially different, both as regards its costume, and the customs of its inhabitants. I have been since assured by a French gentleman, that the site of the opera is a little village opposite to Brest, which has a very fine Calvary; but, after making many inquiries, the only town I could hear of answering his description, was Plougastel, which boasts the handsomest Calvary in Finisterre,—probably in Bretagne.

There are several Druidical monuments to be seen in the neighbourhood of Ploërmel, particularly some ruined dolmens in the Bourg d'Angan, in the pretty valley of St. Couturier; they have the peculiarity of not being placed east and west, a general rule in these remains. On the Vannes road, near Ville au Voyer, is a curious dolmen, surrounded by menhirs;* and

* A tall block of stone, stuck upright in the ground like a pillar, is called a "menhir."

about a mile to the south, at St. Meen, are found a dolmen and several menhirs. Two leagues from Ploërmel is the Château of Trécaillon, built in the fifteenth century, placed in the midst of a piece of water, which enlivens the sombre grey of its slate walls. The remains of an old Roman road from Rennes to Carhaix, are still to be seen in the courtyard of the Château du Mur, near Gaer. There are menhirs to be found on the road to La Gacilly, which is a very dirty town, with a Greek church, and large Hôtel de Ville, but interesting from its vicinity to the ruined Château du Houx, the favourite residence of the lovely Françoise d'Amboise, wife of Pierre, second duke, in 1450. It may be remembered, as a specimen of the rough manners of that time, that this duke struck his good and beautiful duchess before all her court. She meekly implored him to retire into her private room, and there, if he had cause, to beat her as much as he pleased; her gentleness did not prevent her husband from beating her so violently, that it was long before she lost the scars. He had conceived some false suspicion

against her, which he afterwards acknowledged to be unfounded. He became much softened, however, in time, and during his last illness Françoise nursed him devotedly with her own hands ; and after his death she retired into a convent, and, refusing all offers of a second establishment, died a Carmelite nun, thirty years after her husband. It was not uncommon so to punish duchesses in those days, for Jean V. maltreated his wife both with words and blows, because she objected to his forming an alliance with the English ; and, as she was a daughter of Charles VI. of France, the French court determined to send an army to avenge the insult offered her, and the storm was only averted by Jean's making an ample apology.

Ploërmel used to be in old times the appointed place for the grand meeting of the duke and his nobles ; and in 1309, the people were for the first time represented there under the name of *Tiers Etat*. The forest of Paimpont, near Ploërmel, is, in fact, the ancient Broceliandé, where King Arthur and all his knights held high revelry, and sought for perilous adventures ; where the great

wizard, Merlin, lies hidden from mortal sight, and where many other marvellous wonders happened. So we arranged with our honest *voiturier* to take us there, and to the famous Fontaine de Barenton, much to the astonishment of the hotel people, who could not conceive why travellers went there; a whole family had come from Paris with no other object than to visit that fountain; and their coachman privately asked Mademoiselle what they saw in it, but she could not tell him. We tried to enlighten them as to the legends, but without much success. Some gentlemen at the *table d'hôte* questioned us about the forest; they had never heard, and did not believe, it was so near them; they only laughed at M. Souvestre's account of it, thinking him a novel-writer, but instantly acknowledged that they must be mistaken, on hearing that M. Fouquet and others repeated the same story. I was amused to hear these gentlemen declaring that Bretons felt very differently towards Scotch and English; they respected the one nation, but liked the other; and we afterwards found the same feeling widely

spread through Brittany. I can easily understand this feeling, for the Scotch never gained any footing in Bretagne, but were ancient allies of its inhabitants; and their royal houses often intermarried; while the English and Bretons since King Arthur's time seem to have done nothing but fight each other, till civilization taught them sense.

We started at nine o'clock on our expedition for Barenton, undismayed by assurances that our quest would prove fruitless, and disregarding the warnings of Mademoiselle, who said, "She did not wish to frighten us, but the *bonne* of the Parisian family had assured her the road was formed of caverns and mountains alternately." We passed by the old Château de Loyat, a huge building, famed in old times, and to this day, as the resort of all the sorcerers in the country; it is a weird, haunted looking place, and, the peasants say, has as many windows as there are days in the year; there are really nearly three hundred. The proprietor lives in Paris, and the country people believe the wizards pass the day in the château, and

at night dance round a stone cross, till daylight sends them back to their concealment ; as they can at pleasure assume any animal's form they please, it is impossible to recognise them. It was in the forest near this that a woodman in hiding saw a troop of knights burying alive a young girl in her bridal robes ; the man dared not for many years mention what he had seen, but it was afterwards discovered that the murdered girl had refused to marry the person chosen for her by her brothers, having fixed her affections on some one obnoxious to them, and was therefore thus summarily put out of the way.

Our road lay through several dirty, miserable villages. Surely Breton villages must be unique in character : their houses are built of rough, uncut stones, loosely plastered together with mud, a few holes left for windows, but sometimes the doorway is the only outlet for air and light. No wonder Bretons spend so much time out of doors ; and then the extreme filth round their dwellings must give them some discomfort ; all the farm operations are carried on in their narrow streets, which

are filled up with piles of straw, heaps of manure, and litter of every description. These people will not learn from example, for you see the smooth, hard, white, government road cutting through a village, and on each side you step down nearly a foot deep in mud into the streets. These squalid hovels are generally clustered round a fine, grey, old stone church; and the Breton shows his love of ornament by putting an elaborately carved stone over the doorway of a house which does not boast a window; but then the proprietor probably carved out the stone himself, and the glass would have to be paid for.

The peasants lead very hard and toilsome lives, but did not seem in actual want; there always appeared to be a kind of rude plenty in their hovels, in the shape of black bread and vegetable soup. The inhabitants of the villages we passed all knew the fountain we were searching for, and called it Bellanton, preserving the ancient pronunciation of the fourteenth century; they directed our driver, who had a very vague notion of his way, through bye-paths, which

almost justified the Frenchwoman's account of them, till we came out on a gorze-covered common, called here *les landes*, with no trace of road at all. My aunt had alighted long before, and we were compelled to follow her example; we should have been quite lost but for an old woman who came up to see who on earth could have brought a carriage into the middle of *les landes*, and offered to guide us, as she had done some travellers who came on the same quest before. "It was strange; she had lived here for sixty years, and had never heard there was anything curious at the fountain till this year." She chattered away, and we plodded wearily on, over bog-myrtle, whins, and heather, to the outskirts of the forest, when she directed the coachman to take a circuit, and then strike into the wood, where he would find a *grande route*, which would lead us through a swamp up to a bank, and, "*Enfin*, there was the fountain." I could scarcely believe her. Really, it is melancholy to see so celebrated a spot left in such a ruinous condition; a few large stones lying about seem to say it was

once more cared for. The poor little spring is hardly able to force itself through the moss, ferns, and water-plants that choke it up, and the water only loses itself in the swamp; it never freezes or dries up. The peasants still bring their sickly



FONTAINE DE BARENTON.

children to be cured, and say the water is especially powerful in cases of fever. You say, "Ris! ris! Fontaine de Barenton," dropping a pin the while into the spring, whereupon it breaks into

ripples and bubbles; if it laughs you are to be fortunate, if it remains mute you will be unlucky. Tradition and poesy both say the water fizzes round a sword point, but we had nothing larger than pins to try it with, and to these it responded gaily. When the country was in great want of rain, a procession was formed to the fountain, and the priest dipped the foot of the cross out of the church into the water, after which rain is sure to fall abundantly; this ceremony had been successful very lately. The peasants believe the priest can punish them, if he likes, by sprinkling water from the spring on the large stone, the *perron* of Merlin, above the well, which brings rain throughout the whole parish for many days. The old woman little thought how unconsciously she was illustrating tradition in telling us all this. Nora and I stepped down into the well to try the water, which under the moss was sweet, pure, and cold; but the descent was slippery and rather difficult, so, to enable Lady Leslie to taste it, I had to follow Vivien's example, and "make of mine own lady palm a cup." There is a treasure buried

under the fountain ; but Merlin predicted it will be discovered by two brothers, one of whom will thereupon kill the other. It is difficult to believe this is the "perilous fountain" so many poets have united in celebrating. Wace, in the twelfth century, speaks of the many marvelled fountain, "Ki en Bretaigne est mult loée ;" and a hundred years later, Huon de Meri, wishing to see the most curious thing in the country, comes to the famous forest of Broceliandé, and approaches the perilous fountain sword in hand ; he finds it built of marble, shaded by trees, the water clear as silver, and an iron cup beside it ; when he touches the water with the cup, such a storm arises, that the heavens open, and paradise is visible. Calogrenant, one of Arthur's knights, searching for adventures, gallops up and down a whole day, "E ce fu à Broceliande. Une forest en une lande ;" he finds a frightful being who guards the beasts of the forest by command of the holy father at Rome ; this being shows the knight the fountain where the water is colder than marble, and shaded by lovely trees, which never lose their

verdure. He, too, sees the iron cup fastened to a chain. Near him is a beautiful chapel, and a tree, which is the highest pine that grows on the earth ; suspended to it is a golden basin, enriched with emeralds and rubies ; " Plus flamboyant et plus vermeil, Que n'est au matin le soleil ; " a knight comes forth and defies Calogrenant, but is defeated by him ; with much more to the same effect.

To this wondrous fountain was brought the newly-born son of Butor de la Montagne, who confided him, wrapped in gold and silken cloth, to the care of four knights, charging them to expose him at the fountain, and wait at a distance to hear what destiny the fairies would grant him ; and the knights, accepting the charge, swore if they lost the infant, they would submit to be hung up higher than ever bird has flown. The beauty of the child, as it lay under a chestnut-tree, lighted up the wood ; the fated hour approached, and three lovely ladies in white silken robes and golden crowns came to dance at the fountain, and beholding the nobly-born child, dowered him with many high and precious gifts ; but decreed, alas !

that he should be disappointed in love, and the lady of his thoughts should never return his devotion ; then they kissed and left him ; and the knights joyously carried back the treasure their seigneur had trusted to their care. As they galloped away, the ring of their gold and ivory horns woke up the furthest echoes of the forest,—as may be read in the lovely fragment of a poem given us by Mr. Taya. In his book, “Broceliandé,” you may also read how the valiant knight, Ponthus, called on this very spot a royal tournament, in honour of the fair Sidoine, daughter of the Duke of Bretagne, and all the knights who entered the lists hung up their shields on the trees round the fountain and the plain, far and near, was covered with stately pavilions and bannered tents, and all the noblest dames and fairest damsels of Bretagne came to see the brave Ponthus (as a nameless knight) conquer, one after the other, all the seigneurs who challenged him, and send them as prisoners to the fair Sidoine ; softening the pain of their defeat by telling them not to yield to him, but to the loveliest maiden in Bretagne, and then generously

bestowed on his opponents the jewelled arms and collars of pearl which he had won in the East. The vision of the old romancer has vanished, but some mouldering remains of the Tower of Ponthus are still left us to dream over, and a passage in the charter of Paimpont Abbey, of 1467, tells us that at Bellanton, truly, all these things happened.

Nothing is left of all these splendours ; you look around with disenchanted eyes, to see only a wide-spread common and ruined spring ; nay, the pines are still here, but they are small and scattered ; and of the rare and beautiful herbs that embellished the spot, none remain unless it may be that Regal Osmunda fern. “ Est-ce vous, Barenton ? Terre morne et sans voix, qui vous reconnaitrait sous vos noms d'autrefois ? ” We carried off, in remembrance of the spot, some of the baby pines that were growing round, in hopes that they might flourish at home ; and as yet, they seem to thrive in foreign soil.

Just as we were leaving, our coachman came up, having succeeded in getting his horses off *les landes*, and proceeded to measure the depth of the

fountain with his whip, but found it "nothing particular;" in fact, there was nothing to see anywhere, and though pleased to hear that we were contented, I know he considered the question of our sanity as at least questionable. We followed him to the carriage, and felt relieved to see the springs whole after the work they had gone through. The *grande route*, so called, I suppose, in comparison to the one we had left, is only marked out and cleared from trees, but left soft and full of stones; and there was such a bad hill, that the horses tried hard to shirk it, and Nora and I had to run with stones for the wheels two or three times during the ascent. We asked our old woman if she knew any tradition of Merlin's tomb, and she said the last travellers had teased her to find it for them; but she felt sure there was no such place in the forest. I told her, as he was certainly concealed in an oak, she ought to find it out for the benefit of strangers; but she thought one oak so like another through the wood, that she would have no chance of discovering it; and then added, on reflection, that as different parts of the forest

were cut down every twenty years, for charcoal, she felt persuaded that particular tree was gone long ago. She talked a great deal about a battle fought on the brow of the hill, which she called "La Butte des Raides," but I could not find out anything concerning it. We were growing very weary, and in the middle of all this gossiping interchange of questions, it was impossible to realize that we were at last in the Forest of Broceliandé. So, at length finding a rustic seat, formed by the twisted roots of an old oak-tree, we took possession of it, and begging the others to go slowly on and we would follow presently, we waited till the silence was quite unbroken, and then Nora read out from the Idylls, how King Arthur and all his court followed the magic hart with the golden horns, which always disappeared by that fairy fountain at the foot of the hill,—till the air seemed ringing with the pealing echoes of the glorious roundelay that urged the noble hunters on; and we looked with scared eyes into the depths of the enchanted wood, and searched diligently round for some mystic leaf of power to guard

us from evil spells ; but, alas ! no rowan tree was in sight, not a scrap of St. John's wort or vervain could be found ; not even a leaf of modest yarrow was visible, and we were fain to content ourselves with a sprig of the sacred holly, the genet, and a piece of our native oak, and hoped their combined effects might be powerful enough to disperse any malignant charms wrought against us. The necessity of joining our companions, however, called us back from the old to the modern world ; and as we slowly sauntered up the hill, I reverently gathered up a few acorns from the oak that had sheltered us, meaning to rear them carefully at home, and trusting that the guardian dryad haunting the tree would direct my fingers to some of the lineal descendants of Merlin's fabled oak.

The forest and surrounding country are full of legends of this great wizard, who came over from Great Britain, and the fairy Vivien, who seems to have been a Bretonne ; for " at the time when King Ban reigned over Benoist, a part of Bretagne, the fairy Diana pleased herself by showering benefits on Lionas, a great baron and seigneur of Broceliandé.

He married the niece of the Duke of Bretagne, and his daughter, Vivien, dowered by Diana, bewitched and deceived Merlin." Immense groups of stone, in different places, are still pointed out as the dwellings of Merlin, who was so tall—he placed one foot on each side of the valley, and drank out of the *Etang du Roz*. It is always the instinct of an uncivilized nation to connect great power with gigantic size. An old French legend says Merlin lies eternally hidden under a hawthorn tree; his lamentations may still be heard, but he can never be found. Sometimes through the forest echoes the deep baying of hounds, and then the peasants say the weather will be fine, for Arthur and his court have gone out hunting.*

A long monotonous road, unbroken, save by groups of charcoal burners and their stacks of slowly-burning wood, carefully screened from the wind by branches, leads to the old Abbey of Paimpont, founded in 635 by Judicael. It is recorded of this good king, that, passing a river one day, he saw a poor leper in great distress,

* See note A.

because he could not stem the swollen stream. Now, lepers were an accursed race in those days, and all the nobles rode past him, shuddering ; but the king's heart was touched with pity, and, commending his soul to God, he turned back, lifted the loathsome leper in his arms, and carried him across the river, thus giving a noble lesson of charity to his court. His abbey was rebuilt in the fifteenth century, and in its charter we are told that "this grand and vast forest contained four *châteaux* and strong houses, many beautiful lakes, and the finest hunting-grounds that could be found ; also, that in part of it, named the Breil au Seigneur, no flies or venomous beasts could exist for a moment," &c. Great part of the old church is still to be seen, built on the edge of one of those pretty little lakes which break the monotony of the forest.

The immense forges of Paimpont are on the borders of one, which gives an hydraulic force of more than a hundred horse-power. These vast works, which employ some hundred men, are very valuable ; they belonged once to the great house of

Laval, but have passed through many hands since. M. Sellières is now the ostensible (though some people say the Emperor is the real) proprietor; at any rate he has a very pretty *chalet* residence. All the marvels of fabulous times have faded away before these busy, heated workmen, these noisy hammers and glaring furnaces. "Et l'art et le travail sont les seuls enchanteurs." While we were wandering about, looking for a sketch, we found some women gathering acorns, with which they told us they paid their rent, as the proprietor wanted them for seed! Acorns had never been seen so plentiful as they were this year. They gave us a glowing account of the annual *fête* given to the workmen on St. Eloise's day, which had just passed, when they had music, fireworks, and "everything that is most beautiful." It must really be a sight worth seeing. The forest here is so old and so dark, that you can, in one moment, lose sight of the ceaseless clanging forge, the bright new *chalet*, and the constant string of charcoal wagons, and see nothing but the calm, peaceful lake reflecting back the giant trees that hem it round, and guard-

ing zealously the lovely island, crowned by magnificent beeches, hidden among which is a cromlech, asserted by M. Fouquet to be the real tomb of Merlin; at any rate, it is a fit burial-place for a great spirit, and the drowsy charm is so perfect, that one can well imagine the old wizard lying wrapt in his dreamless sleep, still watched over by the same startled forest that echoed back the wicked Vivien's cry of triumph, as she fled, having flung over her trusting companion that glamour of enchantment that hides him from our gaze for ever.

No description of Broceliandé would be complete without a notice of the *Val sans retour*, a mysterious labyrinth, out of which no fickle or false lovers who had once entered it could ever hope to return; for the fairy Morgana raised up a flexible, but impenetrable barrier across any path they turned into. I must not forget also to mention Eon de l'Etoile, a gentleman of Loudeac, in 1148, whose head had been turned by the study of magic. He announced himself as the "Son of God, the Judge of Dead and Living;" collected a number of followers, and

took them all to live in the forest of Broceliandé. They believed he had the power of creating gold, jewels, and clothing, and he used to display quantities of treasure, and allow people to take as much as they liked. He had nocturnal assemblies at Concoret, near Barenton, which gained for the inhabitants of that part the name of sorcerers, and it still clings to them; the priests asserted that he gained his riches by brigandage and robbing churches. At length his heresy became so widely spread, that he was brought before an assembly convoked by Pope Eugène, and condemned to perpetual imprisonment: many of his infatuated followers went to the stake rather than renounce their errors. According to tradition, the magical books of Eon were preserved by the inhabitants of Concoret; those which the priests found were burnt: but at the death of the last sorcerer in this century, his books were hidden in a stream which cannot alter them; because, like the unfading fruits of the spot where still dwell the fairies and Druidesses, they are protected by talismans—so says the learned Abbé Mahé.

The belief in magic has by no means disappeared from Brittany, and even among the priests I have heard of carefully preserved volumes containing spells potent enough to scare away evil spirits.*

We stopped on our way back at Beignon, a very dirty, but picturesque village:—in the church are two remarkably fine painted windows of 1540; one representing the Life of St. Peter, and the other containing a most quaint genealogical tree of the Patriarchs; a single pane of very brilliant colours preserved in another window shows St. Michael killing a scarlet devil; on the beams we saw some queer rude old wood carvings, and in the churchyard several fine large yew trees covered with their soft rosy berries. We sat some time in the village while the horses rested, watching the girls and children bringing home the pigs and cattle for the night; our unwonted appearance alarmed the poor little cows so much, they could hardly be persuaded to pass us; the geese and ducks seemed to come home without

* See note B.

any guidance. The host of the Inn (and also blacksmith of the village) told us the people of the forest used to be a most lawless set, and within a comparatively very short time ago, they thought no more of killing men down by that fountain than he thought of killing pigs. It was getting dusk when we neared Ploërmel, but as our coachman knew every one we met, he frequently stopped to have a chat, and I was often amused at the extreme politeness of these dialogues; after an interchange of high-flown compliments with a man, he would raise his voice to be heard by some women working in a field, and shout, "And these ladies also, how do they find themselves?" These ladies instantly flinging down their hoes came to answer for themselves, and after a hailstorm of good nights we passed on, and reached Ploërmel to find politeness was not confined to the lower classes, for the *table-d'hôte* and its visitors had waited an hour for us; but as we did not appear till past nine, human patience could not be expected to last for ever. I would advise any one taking this long excu-

sion to start by six o'clock, and go by Trehorenteuc, where they will see the pretty chapel and sacred fountain of St. Orrenna, sister of King Judicael: her fountain is supposed to cure blindness. The road by Trehorenteuc is good, and besides, its curé is learned about the forest, and delights to instruct and aid travellers in their researches; we did not know this till afterwards, so lost the benefit of his advice.

Next morning we started to see the "Grands Moulins" about half a league off, and found a very pretty piece of water, called Etang du Duc: the little river l'Hiver enters it on one side, and on the other, the waters turn some large flour mills, and passing through a deep picturesque valley join the river Ninian. On a hill beside the water are the ruins of a château, and a stone with a footprint on it, called Pas du Diable. We could easily have found occupation for several days at Ploërmel, and it was with regret we took our places in the little diligence that starts every morning for Pontivy, passing through Josselin three leagues off. On the road at Mi-voie

is a stone obelisk, erected by modern Bretons to commemorate the celebrated battle of Trente : far more renowned in the county, than that of Hastings is with us. In 1351, the English under Bemborough held Ploërmel, and Beaumanoir with the French held Josselin, the two commanders agreed to meet at Mi-voie with thirty followers each, and have a trial of strength. Both Argentré and Lobineau agree that the English were unfairly dealt with ; in the first place, as only twenty English gentlemen could be found, their ranks were filled up with Germans and Bretons ; then when the day seemed going against the French, because the English kept in such a close square, Guillaume de Montauban left the ranks and mounted his horse. Beaumanoir, thinking he was going to fly, called out, "False knight, if you abandon us now, it will be a disgrace to you and to your race for ever." Guillaume replied, "Do your own work, Beaumanoir, I am doing mine ;" and thereon he galloped up against the English, broke through their square, and materially changed the fortune of the day. It was in this battle that

Beaumanoir, weary and wounded, asked for some water, and a friend called out "Drink thine own blood;" which speech, now chronicled in ballads, roused up the fainting man so, that he fought with redoubled fury; the English were beaten, and the Gallic cock has ever since crowed over the fact. There is another obelisk of the same kind in the Côtes du Nord, celebrating a small victory over us in old days; but of the many times we were victors, their chronicles keep no record. The Bretons are very proud of this monument, and our driver stopped near it, and offered to wait while we went to read the names on it; but as the road was muddy, and we did not feel interested in the names, we declined. Nora told him, as "they were English, and not Scotch, who were defeated, she had nothing to do with it;" and this new version of the matter so puzzled the man, that he drove on.

Josselin nestles half-hidden among wooded hills, and its old-fashioned, foreign-looking houses cluster prettily round the old château; which, though shorn of its ancient glories, presents still

an imposing appearance. The moat is nearly filled up, and the donjon and towers were rased in 1629 ; but its present proprietor, Le Comte de Rohan Chabot, preserves it in great order. In this château lived the great Oliver de Clisson ; whose tomb, though broken at the revolution, still decorates the church. His daughter Margaret, Countess of Penthievre, having heard that Jean IV. was dead, and had left Oliver regent, came up stairs to her father's room before he was up, and tried to persuade him to poison the Duke's children, and let her husband ascend the throne. "Perverse and wicked woman," cried Oliver, "you will one day cause the destruction of your children;" and snatching up his sword, he would have killed her on the spot; but she fled so precipitately from the room, that she fell down stairs, broke her thigh, and remained lame for the rest of her life, and too faithfully fulfilled her father's prophecy.

In 1479, Viscomte de Rohan, a very passionate man, ept one of his sisters shut up in a tower of Josselin Château against her will ; she wrote to her lover, Keradreux, to come to speak to

her under the window ; he came, but was killed by the brother and his servants : the Viscomte was kept many years in prison for the crime. There is much to be seen round Josselin ;—the Priory of St. Croix, the ruined Abbeys of St. Martins, St. Jean des Près, and Mont Cassin, besides lovely walks, and fine rocks. At the village of Guéhenno, three leagues off, is a Calvary of 1550, which has been restored, and is considered the finest in Morbihan.

The peasantry round Josselin retain their old dresses and customs in perfection ; the girls, especially, have a habit that would save much trouble were it introduced into more civilized circles. They appear on *fête* days in red under-petticoats, with white or yellow borders round them ; the number of these denotes the portion the father is willing to give his daughter ; each white band, representing silver, betokens a hundred francs of rent ; and each yellow band means gold, and stands for a thousand francs per year. Thus any young farmer who sees a face that pleases him, has only to glance at the trimming of the petticoat,

to learn in an instant what amount of rent accompanies it.

From Josselin to Pontivy is nine leagues, but we lengthened the road by passing the forges and forest of La Nouée, which are very pretty, and going up to Rohan, a large, uncivilized village, where a fair was going on, and the people seemed nearly frantic with excitement. The narrow streets, ankle deep in mud, were crammed with wild, long-haired Bretons in full costume, dragging or pushing their oxen, horses, or pigs, through the crowd; and neat countrywomen, with their snowy linen coiffures of every imaginable shape, each one more eccentric than the last, and each woman invariably carrying her blue umbrella, without which they never think of moving; and all this shifting crowd were talking, gesticulating, and quarrelling, with the full power of arms and lungs.

A true Breton has no fear of being run over, and never thinks of moving out of your way until he receives a good hard push either from the shaft or the horse's head. I always expected to see the cows' hind legs cut off by the carriage wheels, and

how they escaped was miraculous. When we started, our driver, after shouting and sacréeing till he was hoarse, drove on regardless of consequences, and a woman was set to clear the way ; she ran in front, calling out, and pushing people to the right and left most energetically. Those men who were too stupid to move quickly, she caught round the neck, and pitched into the ditch. The pigs, which had been squealing dismally all the time, became so excited by the additional commotion of our passage, that they grew quite uncontrollable, and broke from all restraint, causing dire confusion. One man, after making frantic efforts to prevent his pig from committing suicide under our wheels, flung himself over it, and we left them rolling together in the mud under a cart.

These fairs are most lively and amusing scenes to a stranger, but all the men leave them quite tipsy, and are dragged home by their poor animals. You see a man making insane and useless attempts to get on his horse's back ; he has sense enough never to let the rope go, and between each roll the master gives, the horse walks on a few steps, and

so, by slow degrees, they get home somehow. It is this eternal drinking that gives the men their stolidly stupid look. People assert that the women drink as much as the men, but I was thankful we never met any of our own sex in that degrading condition ; though I often saw a poor, wearied woman, carrying her big basket, and trying to steady the steps and soothe the excitement of some uproariously tipsy husband or brother.

It would be a Herculean task to attempt counting the numerous way-side crosses in Brittany, they are unending, of all kinds, and all ages, from the most mossy, time-mellowed old stone, thickly covered with mouldering carvings, to the bran-new, perfectly unornamented cross, put up yesterday as a votive offering by the successful farmer ; or, from the modest wooden cross on some nameless grave, to the gigantic crucifix, painted a brilliant green, with large gilt tears on it, reared by the bad taste of some parish priest, as if in mockery, close to the grey walls of some quiet old village church. They greet you on every available corner ; they stand on the grassy edge of every lane ; they

lean down from every bramble-covered bank, as if they would arrest the attention of the passer-by, and assume fantastic shapes in the fitful light of evening; you see the trim market cross in the most crowded town, and you find the "headless cross" of the ballad, on moors lonely enough to have witnessed any deed of blood. If a Breton peasant were always to do as he is bid, and never pass by one of these memorials of his religion without uncovering his head, he might almost as well leave his hat at home; but though the peasant rarely passes a churchyard cross without a salutation, the every-day cross of the roadside has become in many cases too familiar to excite any notice. Numerous as they are now, they seem to have been even more plentiful before the Revolution, for M. Souvestre says, "During the Restoration, they thought of rebuilding the crosses only of the cross-roads, which had been destroyed in 1793; but after a careful research, they found it would require at least 1,500,000 francs to renew all those which existed before that time in Finisterre alone."

We reached the Hôtel des Voyageurs, Pontivy,

in time for the *table-d'hôte*, and had the pleasure all the evening of watching a magnificent blood-red aurora, which gradually spread over the whole sky, and lasted a long time. This town has "two names, two ages, and two faces;" half the town is old, dirty, and poverty stricken; the other half is new, bustling, and important; on one side you lose yourself in narrow, winding, badly-paved, old-fashioned alleys; on the other you find wide, regular, handsome streets. The old town is Pontivy, the new is Napoleonville. Pontivy, a *protégé* of the first emperor's, was almost the only town in Bretagne that remained faithful to his memory; they made some feeble attempts then to change their name in his honour, but names are difficult things to alter; and though, since the accession of the present emperor, its inhabitants have redoubled their efforts to forget their old title, yet the country people can hardly understand what town you allude to unless you use the old term. Bretons receive new ideas very slowly, but grasp tenaciously any opinion they have once formed. During the late progress of their imperial

majesties through Bretagne, at no place were they received with such demonstrations of pleasure as at Napoleonville. Nine hundred of the inhabitants went out on horseback to escort the royal visitors ; three hundred peasants in *fête* dresses, each with his wife mounted *en croupe* behind him, caracoled round, making their clever little horses perform such antics that the empress laughed out loud. They presented a pony to the prince, of their own rearing, receiving in return the promise, that when the new church, to which the emperor contributes 400,000 francs, is consecrated, the prince is to accompany his father to the ceremony, and is to ride on that pony.

The town has received some immunities from the authorities, which are regarded with envy by the neighbouring communes, who, though sullenly acquiescing in the present order of things, retain deep in their hearts a dogged devotion to the old régime, which nothing can shake. People constantly told us the empress had gained for her husband many true partisans during her tour here, by the magic of her beauty alone. She

distributed, wherever she went, numbers of gold crosses, watches, and earrings, to the farmers' wives, accompanied by such pretty speeches, and prettier smiles, that the toughest hearts were melted; and the little prince, if he ever comes to reign over Bretagne, will probably owe as much to his mother's fair face as to his father's astute policy.

We used to hear on all sides the most marvellous stories of the sayings and doings of the Princess B——, the emperor's cousin, who has bought a very large tract of land in the neighbourhood, and is cultivating her cousin's interests in Bretagne; and being a strong-minded woman of peculiar habits, has rather astonished the public mind. People assert "she has nothing of the woman about her but the petticoat;" "when she wears that," adds a bystander, "which is not often." It appears that the princess is passionately fond of shooting, and when going to the chase she doffs her feminine attire, and with a masculine garb, thinks it necessary to adopt the bad masculine habits of smoking and swearing. She stopped one night to change horses at our hotel, and rated

the man who brought them so soundly, that he was quite subdued the next day. She has the reputation of being clever enough to aid the state councils considerably. She has taken great pains to win over the Chouans and wilder peasantry around her; and they, finding themselves better paid and fed than at any former period of their lives, are willing, whenever sober, to shout as desired, "*Vive l'Empereur!*" but when their hearts are opened by liquor, "*Vive Henri V.*" comes out naturally. Thus, at the emperor's reception, though plenty of eating went on all day, no brandy or cider was given out till night, when the peasants were allowed to get drunk, and shout Henry V. as much as they pleased; but by that time the day had passed off well, the emperor was away, and there was no one left to report to the public the changed aspect of affairs.

Pontivy Proper possesses a church of the fifteenth century, with the *mâcles* of the Rohans still on its columns. In the cemetery is a handsome *menhir*; there is also a château of 1485, belonging to the Rohans. This proud and powerful family

tried hard to gain the duchy, but did not succeed. They had a saying which is characteristic,—“ *Roi je ne puis ; Prince je ne daigne ; Rohan je suis.*”

The château has been a large and very strong one, with a deep moat all round ; it now forms a peaceful retreat for a convent of nuns. Napoleonville has no public buildings, save its Hôtel de Ville, and a large, handsome cavalry barracks ; the stones for which were principally brought from the fine old château of “Coët en fau,” near Seglien, five leagues off, which was destroyed in the Revolution.

If the traveller's taste turns towards Celtic remains, he must wend his way to Cleguérec, three leagues distance, where each village round presents either dolmens or menhirs ; one dolmen at Bod-er-mohet has the peculiarity of pillars placed inside. There is a valley here, touching the forest of Quénecan, which is so wild and gloomy that it is called “Gorge de l'enfer.” There are other druidic remains scattered about ; but the great pride of this district is the number and beauty of its chapels, which seem endless.

There are two in the little village of Stival, with remarkably beautiful painted windows. On the altar of the church at La Houssaie is a curious stone carving of the Passion; in the church of Carmes are some beautiful frescoes painted on the roof; at Quelven is a flamboyant church, with the tower restored; and at St. Laurent, near Séglien, is a lovely chapel, with a limpid fountain, dedicated to St. Nodez, in the north transept.

The country round Napoleonville is very hilly and picturesque. The peasant women quite discard the little shawl so much worn in the north, and adopt a tight bodice, with the arm-holes so much enlarged at the back, that sometimes only a strip an inch wide is left between them.

We determined to stop at Baud, on our way to Lorient, to see the famous statue of Quinipilly; and arranged with our bustling little hostess to give twelve francs for a carriage. She then fetched her husband to settle time, &c. He, honest man, said to her, in a low tone,—“It will be eight francs;” but was instantly desired by his keener better half to “say twelve.” This

by-play was overheard by Nora, and related to us after the agreement was made. I thought twelve francs very cheap, as the distance is six leagues; but on no subject did we find greater difference of price than in carriage hire: it varies in every town. We always gave the people what they asked, if it sounded the least reasonable; and two francs a league seemed the usual price, though we were sometimes asked less, and often much more. At nine next morning we started, in a one-horse machine, driven by the host himself, who gave us a great deal of information on various subjects.

The public roads are kept in repair by government; the cross-roads by the parish. Each man called a *cantonnier* has one league of road to keep in order; each carriage, cart and horse, owes three days work to the roads; between them all, they certainly manage to preserve their highways in first-rate order. The imposts on nearly everything are almost double what they used to be; a bottle of wine, which some time ago paid fifty centimes duty, now pays eighty-five, and other things in proportion, which makes living much

dearer than it once was. There is plenty of game about, and you can get a licence for twenty-five francs ; but a *gendarme* goes with you to see you do not shoot any game but that for which you have taken your licence. They have a unique way of hunting foxes : the creature is tracked to his hole, then dug out and shot on the spot—very degrading to poor Renard to be treated so cavalierly. The country is almost too hilly to be hunted over on horseback.

On this road you go a little out of the way to see the valley of Castenec, which was occupied for a long time by a Roman legion. The place is full of the *débris* of Roman bricks. Old coins and bronze lance-heads have been found there, besides a stone post, bearing the name of Trebonianus, emperor in 252. Part of this post now forms the lintel of a door at La Garde farmhouse. There are some remains of a château still visible ; and Castenec was the original home of the Quinipilly statue. From hence you go down to see St. Nicodème, where is a lovely chapel of the 15th century, and a very graceful

fountain of a somewhat later date. In this neighbourhood St. Gildas had a small hermitage, and a tiny chapel, outside of which was placed his wonderful sounding-stone ; which, on being struck, emitted a noise like a horn, and was always used by him to call the faithful to prayers. The stone still holds its old position, and answers to the slightest touch.

The country, as you approach Baud, is very pretty and wooded. The town presents no feature of particular interest. The shutters and venetians of the church-tower have been painted a brilliant green, and stare flauntingly out from the old grey stones. Some of the women wear very ugly hoods, looking just like the crown of an old black bonnet with the front cut off, and a deep curtain sewed round it. Another Baud head-dress looked like a white sun-bonnet, and was not unbecoming. We saw many really pretty girls round the cottages, and some lovely children, supremely happy and gloriously dirty, in the muddy streets. The good lady of the hotel kindly sent a little girl, who spoke French, to show us the way to

the Château of Quinipilly, about a mile off. It is necessary to have a guide, as the path is difficult to find. The château is buried in the forest of Camors. On the road we found a number of children going to gather chestnuts. Of course they instantly changed their plans to suit ours, and formed a procession after us. We passed through corn-fields and orchards, under magnificent beech and chestnut-trees, close by a most alarming and loud-voiced mastiff, till we reached some farm-buildings, which surround what remains of the old château; in the middle of which, on a granite pedestal, stands the far-famed goddess of Quinipilly. It is a grey statue, larger than life, and looks, to unscientific eyes, unmistakeably and solemnly Egyptian; but long and furious have been the discussions raging in the learned world over this silent figure, whose origin and purpose seem more provokingly mysterious than the sphinx herself. Is it meant for a Venus, or an Isis? and is it Roman or Egyptian? The only thing quite certain is, that the statue is very ancient. When it was at Castenec, it was called

Femme de la Garde, and the peasants worshipped it as a goddess, and sacrificed cattle to it. The priests, to stop this practice, had the statue thrown into the river Blavet, whereon it rained for fourteen days without cessation, till the peasants in alarm rescued their goddess from her watery bed, and, replacing her in her old position, the presents and sacrifices came flowing in more numerous than ever. Some people say the statue was two or three years in the river; but the peasants prefer the story of her instant revenge. The priests were scandalized at this state of things, and it was determined to carry the goddess to Quinipilly. The seigneur gave her the château and surrounding lands; and in 1696 she was removed in great state to her new abode, all the peasants assisting, each labourer sending a horse or pair of oxen. It was about this time the statue was recut, in some degree; and it is these alterations that have so bewildered the antiquarians. There are three letters, I I T, carved on a band across the forehead, that seem to be more puzzling than the mystery of Edipus. At all

events it would be difficult to find a more beautiful or appropriate site for the rejected goddess's abode; shrouded in the gloomy forest, and reigning in undisturbed solitude over the ruined and grass-grown memorials of bye-gone days, it is impossible to help feeling meditatively inclined in her still and stony presence. A clear stream of water runs through the pedestal at her feet into a very handsome cut stone basin where the goddess was wont in olden times to bathe—now, I suppose, her joints have become stiffened by years.

I chose a pretty little girl out of the flock surrounding us, to sit in the fore-ground of my sketch, and then picked out a little black-capped boy to stand by her, and found I had pitched on a brother and sister, to the great amusement of the children. As we happened to have no sous with us, we bestowed a packet of English pins on the girl for her mother; the value of which she seemed quite to understand. We offered them some little rolls, but they said they did not like white bread.

Just after leaving the château you see a large

rock on the side of the hill covered with moss or turf, and bearing evident marks of mason-work, especially a staircase on each side leading



STATUE AT QUINIPILLY.

to the top ; it was no doubt some kind of Pagan altar, and has been Christianised by having a Virgin and child in a glass case stuck into a hole. The little girl said “ that Virgin was very

great at curing fevers ;” and the guide-book gives you a whole page of the raptures you ought to feel at beholding “ the triumph of the feeble Virgin over heathenism.” But, however, as we saw nothing but a very coarse plaster image with its cheeks and eyebrows painted up by some village artist, I could only think that it was hardly such a respectable object of worship as the grey old statue adjoining.

If you have a day to spare you should go from Baud to Locminé, and stop at the village of Bot-Coët to see two granite caryatides now used for door-posts ; they were found in Quinipilly, and brought here in 1804. They have given rise also to many learned disputes ; but it appears certain they are not antique, but date from the fifteenth century, as they bear the motto of the de Languéouez, at that time owners of Quinipilly. This motto contains a deeper sentiment than one would expect to find in such an old one, “ Would you conquer, learn to suffer.” There is a chapel at Locminé dedicated to St. Colomban, the patron of madmen and idiots ; and at Moustoir-ac, on the

road to Vannes, some Celtic remains. The moment we arrived in Baud we had engaged a carriage to take us on to Lorient that evening ; and when we returned to the hotel the man came to tell us that, as Lorient, like all fortified towns, closed its gates every evening, it would be impossible to arrive there in time, and we must stop at Hennebon ; two leagues nearer. A great difference of opinion existed as to the hour when the gates closed, so it was impossible to calculate exactly ; but the man knew very well that he could not get into Lorient that night when he engaged to do so, but was afraid of spoiling his bargain by saying so, and only mentioned it when quite too late to make other arrangements. He had only asked ten francs to take us to Lorient, eight leagues ; so, of course, it was better for him to save himself two leagues. We were much vexed at first, but considering afterwards that, as we were going on to Carnac, Hennebon was a better starting point for us than Lorient, we acquiesced patiently ; only it was an additional lesson to us, that it is impossible to be too explicit in

making your bargain with a *voiturier*. Dinner was ready, but was waiting for a "Monsieur," who was expected. He appeared in a few moments, and apologized for detaining us; but he had lost his way in the wood, and not speaking Breton, could get no directions from the peasants: he had seen us at so many *table-d'hôtes* during the past week that he spoke to us as an old fellow-traveller. When we left the hotel he drove off in a light little carriage which could go very fast, and we had a ponderous white horse and a small boy for a postilion. After walking slowly for about a mile, we suggested to him that we did not wish to be all night on the road; but when the poor child told us he and the horse had just arrived from Vannes, nine leagues off, we saw it was impossible to urge them on, and resigned ourselves cheerfully to circumstances, as every one must do who travels in Brittany. The "Monsieur" who dined with us, however, was not so patient, and evidently thought we should never arrive at all: after going back two or three times to see what had become of us, finding it useless to urge our

little driver on, and seeing my aunt was nervous about the tired horse, he constituted himself our advanced guard, and escorted us into Hennebon. On the top of each hill we could see the friendly light of his lamps waiting till we came crawling slowly up, and so guided us up to the hotel. And it was from real kindness he acted so; for, the moment he could be of no farther service, he retired, never even coming to the saloon (unlike a Frenchman) to wish us "*Bon soir.*" I felt quite sorry we never happened to see him again, that we might express our thanks for his politeness.

Before retiring to rest we sent for a *voiturier*, to settle for the next day; a woman presented herself, making her husband sit on the door-step till the bargain was concluded. She told us we could not manage Carnac and Chartreuse the same day, but must sleep at Auray; and she was willing to give us a carriage for thirty francs for the trip. Now it happened we were nearly at the end of our French money, and could get no English changed till we reached Lorient, so we were half-afraid of risking two more nights at unknown hotels.

Our landlady looked on a sovereign as a most unsafe medium of exchange, and it was only after long and elaborate calculations, that we determined on running the chance and seeing Carnac at all events; and so the conference broke up, by which time our hostess had come to the conclusion that she would not mind lending us fifty francs herself rather than we should lose the trip. Fortunately we did not require to put her generosity to the test.

Next morning we came down to a hurried breakfast, and having some letters to post I asked the *bonne* to get me two stamps, using the words "*Timbres des postes*," which she could not comprehend at all. I was not surprised at that, however; for on applying to the landlady, she instantly told the girl to fetch two of "*ces petits bonhommes la*," and the stamps appeared in a few seconds; I never heard the Emperor's head so designated before. We were obliged to trust ourselves again to the tender mercies of a very juvenile postilion: certainly French boys seem trusted with responsible positions earlier than English ones are. The poor child was quite bent double

with asthma; he had been travelling for three nights, and yet seemed very happy, and told us cheerfully he had no chance or hope of a cure, and spent the intervals of coughing in whistling merrily.

We soon left the shady woods and cultivated fields of Hennebon for a flat sandy country; the first object of interest was the Church of Merlevenez, a remarkably perfect Romanesque building of the twelfth century, with a tall spire of the fifteenth. We crossed Pont Loris, near Belz, where an arm of the sea runs inland, forming several islands; on one of these is the chapel where St. Kado, who was the son of an Irish king, lived as a hermit, and was afterwards made a bishop. "Born an earthly prince, he became a prince of the church, and is now a prince in heaven," says M. Fouquet. His island is joined to the mainland by a causeway of large stones; the legend of this rude bridge is thus quaintly given by M. Souvestre. "Saint Kado inhabited the Island of Caduod. For a long time he had wished for some means of transit which would enable the faithful

to visit him without having recourse to their boats. He therefore addressed himself to the Virgin to obtain a bridge across the river; but the housekeeper of Paradise said that such things were out of the province of women; and he must speak to the Trinity, who, though they had the highest consideration for St. Kado, replied that the saints of Brittany ruined them in miracles, and the angels whom they would have employed in his behalf were occupied elsewhere. Kado, thus refused, bethought him of the devil, who had always been looked upon as an excellent mason, and inquired his plans and conditions. Satan sketched on red paper the design of a wonderfully solid bridge, which he promised to build at once if the saint would let him take 'the first living creature that passed over it.' Kado consented, and the devil set to work; his wife helped him, carrying stones of a ton weight in her apron, and the bridge was completed in one night. As soon as it was finished, Kado, who was a sharp man, let loose an old black cat, calling to the devil to take his payment of a living creature. The wicked

spirit, ashamed of being so duped, was about to destroy all his work, but the saint ran, holy water in hand, and put him to flight: so much haste did the saint make, that his foot slipped and left a mark, seen to this day, and called St. Kado's Slide."

Those whose taste inclines towards antiquities may find plenty of occupation in the "*Ile de Riec*," near St. Kado, where are some ruins that have hardly been touched, and never described.

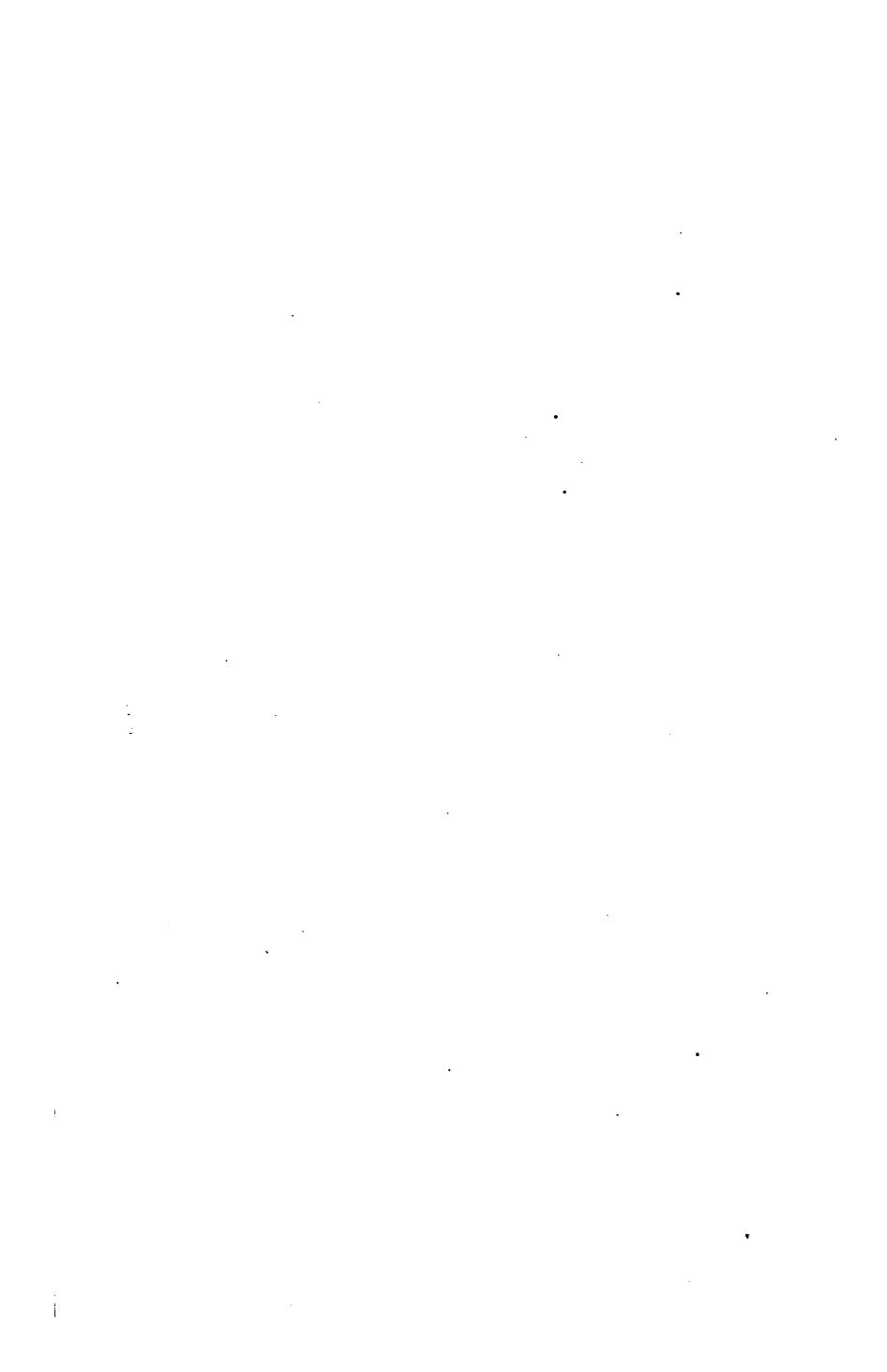
At the village of Locquetas, two leagues from Belz, is found a singular dolmen in the form of a cross. Round Erdeven are many Druidical remains, and between it and Plouharnel, even along the road, you pass several. We got quite puzzled, and gazed with deep interest on each grey moss-grown boulder that lay half hidden by turf, trying to discover *cuvettes*, or some other unnatural mark that might elevate it to the dignity of a Celtic remnant. You see hundreds of menhirs, &c., all along the coast, but, as M. de Freminville remarks, "their number is their sole merit."

We stopped at M. Bail's Inn, at Plouharnel,

to order coffee and see the dolmen he excavated; it looks like three small and very perfect temples close together, at least they seemed small to us, after the Roch aux Feès: there used to be numbers of menhirs between this and Corconno, but most of them have been carried away, or broken up. The church and village of Carnac were almost entirely built of Druid stones. The government do not now allow these old stones to be destroyed, but as no one keeps any account of them it is easy enough to evade this rule. M. Bail found two gold collars and some bits of earthen vases in his dolmen ten years ago. One collar was given to the proprietress of the land, the other is at his house; a broad, flat, rudely made band of gold, cut in strips in front. He has also some polished stone knives, hammers, and one bronze implement, which have been found in different places. It is one league's drive from this to Carnac, where we first walked into the church: on one side is a statue of St. Cornely (patron saint of cattle) with a cow on each side of him, all brilliantly coloured. The porch is surrounded by a large and very curious

stone ornament, in shape something between a gigantic crown and the skeleton of an octagonal roof; it is said to have been carved out of a single Druidical stone, which may be true, of course, but we saw none that were nearly thick enough for the purpose, though many were longer; inside the porch were some frescoes, and on the walls were hung directions for the oyster fishing, with lists of the days each bed might be dredged; some only for two hours at a time, twice a week. The oysters of these parts were very celebrated in the days of the Romans, and still retain their character. The "stations" in this church were in white plaster bas-relief, much prettier than the coarse prints which are generally used. The boys in the village looked very gay and picturesque with their fisher's caps, and red sashes round their waists.

It is a great relief at Carnac to find no guides ready to pounce on you, and insist on your looking at things you have no wish to see; you are allowed to roam where you please; and we sauntered up to the Mont of St. Michel, which is a very large tumulus, raised originally to some Pagan deity





CARNAC.

(Bel, I believe), but now bearing a little white chapel dedicated to St. Michel. From this mound you see for miles around, and begin to comprehend what is meant by Carnac, with its long lines of gigantic and mysterious stones, flinging all archæologists into despair, but only promising a delightful day's wandering to those who are contented to wonder, and admire, without attempting to understand.

From the mount you can arrange which part of the landscape to explore; if you direct your steps to the Château du Lac, a large white building easily found, you encounter dolmens and menhirs at every step; if you prefer a shorter stroll, you can saunter among acres of menhirs close to you, and lose yourself in speculations as to the possible origin of all these rows of upright granite blocks. Your speculations will probably be as correct, and nearly as amusing, as many of those who have gone before you;—from the Bretons, who believe them to be the soldiers of a large army petrified by St. Cornely, and assert, that at night, when the chapel is lit up with ghostly fire, their skeletons may be seen listening to a sermon preached by

Death, and those who have been near enough to hear the tones of his voice liken them to the splashing of water on a sea-beach, which, considering the neighbourhood of the sea, would be the most probable sound heard at that time;—down to the suggestion of a modern savant, who thinks the stones were set up to keep the wind off the tents of some great army. Seeing, however, that they average from thirteen to twenty feet, he ought to give us some particulars about the gigantic nation who used them: perhaps the stones have grown since then!

The coachman of a French family, who like ourselves were wandering about, came to ask if we “were amused?” he himself was “very much bored, and thought the stones not worth looking at, as he felt sure they were left in their present position by the Deluge, and he only wished his master would have finished looking at them.” One generally hears these kind of remains called Druidic, and most people are content to receive them as such; but some learned men refer them to many other religious systems, chiefly distinguish-

able by having very long names, as Ophiolatri, &c. &c. I can imagine an old savant puzzling himself to distraction over them all. It is rather a grand idea, that all these varied remains should be supposed to typify the stony folds of one enormous serpent; at any rate, the whole of the monuments seem to have been originally connected in one mighty series. From the colossal menhir at Locmariaquer, sixty-one feet long (broken and prostrate now), the whole tract of land, including the islands in the sea of Morbihan, passing by Carnac, almost up to Port Louis, a distance of about thirteen leagues (or thirty-nine miles), appears to have been once covered with monuments of different kinds. Perhaps we may never precisely learn what was the faith of the people who have left us such magnificent memorials of their adoration; and the longer you look at those solemn gray stones, the less surprised you feel that ignorant and imaginative peasants, living always among these wonderful vestiges of the past, should weave a network of romance round each separate relic; and believe, as all untutored nations do,

that effects so far beyond their powers to imitate, can only be referable to magic. One grows superstitious oneself after gazing long on those mystical stones; they assume such weird and uncouth shapes in the gloaming light, that I for one should be exceedingly sorry to pass a night among them.

If a menhir indicates a tomb, then Carnac must have been a favourite cemetery in olden times; if it commemorates a great action, then many doughty deeds must have been wrought in these plains. There seems little doubt the ancient Bretons worshipped these old stones, for in the fifth century the Armorican bishops were desired to refuse church rites to all "who worshipped upright stones." Even in 658, a council of Nantes speaks of "trees, which the Druids had consecrated to demons, still respected, almost worshipped, and no branch allowed to be broken; also ancient stones, before which ignorant Christians placed candles, not reflecting, that by those superstitious practices they renounced their baptism." The order of the Nantes Council, that all Druidical remains should be destroyed, was (fortunately for us) only obeyed

in the Rennes and Nantes districts. M. Souvestre thinks the "Morbihan peasant is only a baptized Celt," who, under a veil of Christianity, in secret adores the mysterious monuments that surround him. He may reverence them in private, but he does not object to pilfering them in public whenever he wants a good stone; as witness the extraordinary decrease of menhirs near Plouharnel: we saw a hoary menhir ignobly turned into a gate-post, and Christianised by having a cross roughly cut on it, which forcibly reminded us of M. Souvestre's amusing legend, which I will condense here for the benefit of those who have not read the "Foyer Breton."

"Bretons believe that on Christmas Eve the gift of speech is given to oxen and asses, in remembrance of the manger of Bethlehem; and a beggar man who had a bad reputation for dealing in sorcery, overheard them once talking about the treasures concealed under the stones of Plouhinic; which stones, once every hundred years, are allowed on New Year's night to go and drink at the river Intal, leaving their riches exposed; whoever wishes to

seize the treasure must be provided with a piece of misletoe surrounded by five-leaved clover, as the stones return so quickly to their places that it is impossible to escape being crushed by them unless you possess these magic leaves; so also in order to prevent the gold from turning to dust, as enchanted gold always does, a human life must be sacrificed; a baptized soul must die before the demons allow tranquil possession of the riches of Plouhinic. The fortunate mendicant who listened to all this information went out immediately to search for the required herbs, and returned successful to Plouhinic the last day of the old year. He then began to look for a companion to be the victim; and soon saw Bernez, a young labourer, amusing a leisure moment in cutting a cross on the largest menhir, and proposed to him to join the adventure of the coming night. Bernez, desperately in love with a fair paysanne, but too poor to marry, flung himself into the enterprize with alacrity, knowing nothing of the doom that awaited him. New Year's Eve found the two companions anxiously watching the rows of men-

hirs. Just as midnight sounded, the whole group with great noise quitted their places, and rolled along like drunken giants to the river, while the men threw themselves on the gold and jewels which filled up the holes they had left ; but before they had collected half enough a fearful thundering announced the return of the giants. ‘ We are lost,’ cried Bernez.—‘ You are, but I am safe,’ said the beggar, presenting his magic bouquet, before which the stones recoiled and turned to crush Bernez, when the largest one placed itself as a guard before him ; it was the stone on which he had carved the cross ; by this rude baptism it had become Christianized, and would not permit its benefactor to be killed. All the other stones having settled into their places, it rolled towards its own, and passing the beggar, crushed him like an insect : the magic leaves had no power over a baptized stone. Bernez, therefore, obtained all the mendicant’s treasures in addition to his own ; he forthwith married the fair Rosenn, and of course lived very happily ever after.”

The little cross road from Carnac which joins

the Auray one, is certainly rather trying, both to the springs of the carriage and the nerves of its occupants; fortunately it only lasts about three miles, and then you get into the region of telegraphs and cantonniers again. On the way you pass a large tumulus indented in the middle with a menhir on one end; but really we had seen more monuments than we could remember, and hardly looked at this one.

Auray, nine miles from Carnac, is a pretty bustling town: the numbers of travellers passing through insure good hotels—most people go to the Pavillion d'en Haut; I thought I had made a mistake in the name till I saw the rival establishment, Pavillion d'en Bas. Le Baud declares Auray was founded by King Arthur; at all events it was an important town in the 10th century: some traces of its old château are still to be found in the public promenade Du Loch, from whence is seen a splendid view. Rarely can be found a landscape and line of coast so full of historical associations, so rich in natural beauties and ancient remains. Auray has always been a point

of contention between the opposing armies that alternately ravaged Brittany, and has stood countless sieges. It was at this port that Isabella, the golden-haired daughter of James of Scotland, landed in 1442, when she came to marry François I.; she went from Auray to Rennes, where she and the King were crowned with great pomp.

Next morning saw us starting at seven o'clock, in accordance with the directions of the polite *Chef de Cuisine*, who assured us with a multiplicity of bows, "it was necessary to start at that hour, in order to assist at the early mass at St. Anne's." A short drive of a league takes you to this the most celebrated place of pilgrimage in all France. On the way we passed Pleneret, where a funeral was being conducted; all those who die at St. Anne's are brought here for burial. Our little postilion pulled off his cap as we passed it, in accordance with the prejudices of the country from the days of Charles de Blois, who reproved one of his companions for passing a cemetery without uncovering his head, saying, "Beaumanoir, re-

member you too will die one day." By the way-side is a wooden cross erected to the memory of a soldier who was killed in the Revolution: his remains were removed to the cemetery, but afterwards replaced in his original grave, from whence the superstitious peasants carry away the earth, believing it will cure fever. The roads leading to St. Anne are wide and well kept, to accommodate the crowds of pilgrims, who flock to the far-famed shrine in such numbers, that sometimes 80,000 people are collected round it at once.

There must have been a very ancient chapel to St. Anne, on this spot, for it was destroyed in 699, and the statue, whose miraculous preservation has made the modern church so famous, was buried for 900 years in a field called Bocenno, which, says the legend, had never been ploughed in the memory of man, all efforts to induce the oxen to approach the sacred spot being fruitless. The statue was eventually found by a poor labourer, named Nicolazic, and its discovery is related by Père Martin, who has succeeded in making a volume out of that simple fact. The

number of lights, mysterious appearances, visions and sounds, necessary to induce Nicolazic to undertake the quest of the lost image; his hopes and fears during the time; his uncertainties and confidence; the utter scorn and incredulity of all around him; are detailed with great minuteness and some skill, through so many chapters, during which everything points so plainly to the one spot; that you cannot conceive why they will not look in the field, which however is at last done; and the long-lost statue was discovered on the exact spot now occupied by the fountain, whose waters are reputed to possess great healing powers. The present chapel was built in 1628, and hundreds of miracles instantly raised the fame of the resuscitated St. Anne to the highest possible pinnacle. None of these miracles however, it is curious to remark, have been attested for the last two hundred years: some of them are sufficiently wonderful. A little girl fell into a mill pond, passed through the wheel, and was taken out quite dead, and so crushed and disfigured as to be unrecognizable; the parents vowed a pil-

grimage to St. Anne, and instantly the child got up, and next day only a few scars remained to remind them of the miracle. Pages are filled with occurrences of the same kind, miracles continue to happen every day, but are not attested now, because, says the Priest, they have already so many it is unnecessary to collect more.

When we alighted at the gate and prepared to cross the court of the church, we were surrounded by women importuning us to buy some long wax tapers; in vain we refused, they could not comprehend any one entering St. Anne without a taper, and followed us unceasingly. We told them we were Protestants and never carried *bougies*. "But these are not simple *bougies*, they are sacred lights; it is absolutely necessary to carry one; it is impossible to approach the altar without." Finding, however, we were bent on going in with empty hands, the most active of our persecutors changed her tone, and said, "Take the tapers, ladies; if you have no money to pay me now, never mind; I know you will pay when you can; at all events take the lights," and it

was with difficulty we escaped from her "taperless," into the church, of which the most peculiar and striking ornament is the number of pictures, votive offerings from pilgrims, that line the walls; each representing the event which called forth the gratitude of the giver. Some of them are old and quaint enough to atone for their mediocrity; one is especially striking, of a child lying on a couch, with a big two-headed snake darting from its mouth. It was dying of some unknown disease when the mother vowed it to St. Anne, and instantly the cause of its uneasiness appeared in the shape of this uncomfortable looking serpent, which seems as if it would make its escape unremarked. The modern pictures that crowd the walls are so bad, one would almost believe each pilgrim had thought it necessary to paint his own picture, to judge from the singular productions before you.

Numbers of sailors seem to apply to St. Anne, and if she performed for them any of the astonishing things you are requested to believe, their devotion is not to be wondered at. We saw

several sailors come in just to kneel at the altar, and kiss the relic in front of it, while we were there. The gay gilt and coloured figure, the object of so much adoration, is after all not the real statue whose discovery caused so much commotion. It seems that the saint, after carefully preserving her image for so many centuries, found her power fail before the seething wave of the Revolution, for the miraculous statue was then carried to Vannes, and burnt with many other church relics. A bystander recovered a piece of the head, which is seen encased in the pedestal of the new figure. The pilgrims, however, believe that to be the original image, and venerate it accordingly. Outside the church is an altar over the gateway with a staircase at each end, called the Santa Scala, which before the Revolution had some beautiful statues of the Holy Family; those on it now are copies from the monastery of Cordeliers at Auray. Numerous booths are ranged round the gateway covered with medals, charms, and all kinds of *souvenirs* of the pilgrimage. During the summer, whole villages seem

to arrive *en masse* from great distances, and when the concourse is very large the communion is sometimes given 40,000 times a day. All the priests of the neighbourhood are collected to hear confessions, and all night monks, priests, and *gens d'armes* walk about to preserve order among the crowds, who sing canticles to dissipate *ennui*.

The natural consequence of these assemblies of pilgrims, is the gathering a swarm of beggars who surround you, and clamour for alms, and repay you by gabbling over scraps of Latin on their rosaries. I never beheld a collection of more miserable, sickly, and deformed objects. They do not seem to have learnt how to vow themselves to St. Anne yet, notwithstanding all the examples before them in the pictures of sudden cures. All through the country it was astonishing how many peasants had been to St. Anne; it is almost the only journey they ever take, and the only place they seem to think worth seeing.

From St. Anne we passed through Auray again on the way to Chartreuse, nearly a league on the other side. This church was built near the spot

where the famous battle of Auray was fought, in 1364; the great war of succession had lasted twenty-three years, and 200,000 men had perished. It was ended by the death of Charles de Blois in this decisive battle, when the Count of Montfort ascended the ducal throne as Jean IV. He attributed his success in some measure to the assistance of the English, as his army was much smaller than that of his rival. It was on this disastrous day that Duguesclin was made prisoner; the tide of battle had turned against him, all the flower of Breton chivalry lay dead around him, he had nothing but his gauntlets left wherewith to defend himself from a crowd of Montford's soldiers, when Chandos forced his way through the *mêlée*, calling out, "Duguesclin, yield yourself to me;" and for the first time the Breton hero was vanquished. It is said he had been begged not to fight on St. Michel's day by his learned wife Tiphaine, but he had neglected or forgotten her warning.

Charles de Blois was the model of a christian knight and soldier; even his rival acknowledged

with tears that "he was the wisest and most valiant of princes, and the most honest man of his age." After his death, miracles were wrought at his tomb, and his friends tried hard to have him canonized; but Jean IV. would not allow such honour to be done his foe.

It is recorded, that a pet white hare, of which Charles was very fond, left him the night before the battle and remained with Montford, who hailed it as a good omen; and afterwards, some think, founded the order of "Ermines" in allusion to it.* This was the first order into which ladies were admitted under the title of Chevaleresses.

* I do not, however, see why he should not just as well have alluded to his own shield. Ermines had been the armorial bearings of Bretagne for a long time, Jean III. Duke of Bretagne, 1317, laying all other charges aside, bore them alone. Miss Middleton tells us, that "Ermine, in heraldry, was a favourite charge, symbolic of purity." "Ermine," says an old author, "is the skin of a little '*bestelette blanche*,' so remarkable for nicety and cleanliness, that it will rather fall into the hands of its pursuers, than escape by passing through any foul place, whereby its fair skin might be defiled." Alain Bouchart says, the origin of the Breton arms was on this wise:—"Flolo, the Roman tribune, dared King Arthur to mortal combat before the city of Paris. Now Flolo was much taller than Arthur, and strong as a giant. One of his first blows struck Arthur down, and the streaming blood blinded him. For a moment all

During the battle, Montfort had vowed a church to the Virgin, which was afterwards built at Rennes ; but he could not forget the field where he gained his crown, or the brave men who won it for him. He had their bones collected together, and built over them the chapel of St. Michel, and a large hall, where the new Knights of the Ermine received the collars and decorations of their orders. About a century later it was made into a monastery for the monks of Chartreuse. No Breton yet dares to cross the battle-field of Auray after nightfall, for he believes the restless spirits of those unfortunates who died without the priest's blessing, and whose bones, escaping the pious care of Jean IV., still sleep in unconsecrated ground, come flitting ceaselessly over the spot, and in their swift passage strike down lifeless

seemed lost ; but the Virgin, suddenly appearing, spread her mantle, furred with ermines, over his shield ; which vision, dazzling the Roman, gave Arthur time to recover himself ; and with his good sword Caliburne he dealt such a blow to Flollo, that he fell down dead. Wherefore the king took ermines for his arms, instead of the three crowns or, on azure, he had formerly borne ; and since then, all Princes and Dukes of Bretagne have borne ermines on their shields.

any rash mortal who crosses their path. Louis XV. built the present chapel, on the ruins of the old one. The rich wood-work of the stalls, which was beautifully carved by the monks, has been carried into Auray, and may be seen in the church of the Cordeliers. At the Revolution, the monks of Chartreuse were compelled to abandon their abode; but, fortunately, the deserted building escaped the Vandalism of the populace. The place is now invested with a new interest, being the spot selected to receive the bones of the victims in the disastrous expedition of Quiberon—that name of “bloody memories.” Frenchmen will tell you France has not yet paid the penalty of all her crimes during the stormy revolutionary era, and centuries of penitence will hardly efface the blood-stained page of Quiberon from its annals.

It was towards the end of the Convention when numbers of exiles scattered through England and Germany, wearying for their homes, determined to organize an expedition against the Republic. They expected to have collected 100,000 men; but on landing at Quiberon, “whether they were

badly seconded by jealous England, or betrayed by their chief," is uncertain, at all events their force only numbered 10,000; but then it contained the *élite* of ancient France. La Vendée was favourable, many Breton gentlemen were ready to aid, but by a series of misfortunes they were hemmed in by the army of General Hoche, on the promontory of Quiberon; on one side a force three times their number, on the other, a tempestuous sea which would not permit vessels to approach; nothing was left the miserable exiles, but to lay down their arms or die. Their general, Sombreuil, willingly accepted death for himself, but stipulated for the lives of the venerable Bishop of Dol, and his companions in arms. Hoche, after accepting this capitulation, had the grief of seeing his promise set aside by the Convention. The first commission sent down to try the prisoners, refused to act on account of this pledge, but a new one was soon formed.

The prisoners were confined in the churches of Auray, Vannes, and Quiberon, where ladies were allowed to visit and console them; without

their aid most of the unhappy creatures must have starved. Twenty prisoners were each morning brought up for trial, and each day twenty victims were murdered, almost on the same spot where Charles de Blois and so many Breton noblemen fell in old times. During their massacre several exiles were permitted to escape—some of their judges even were persuaded to connive at their flight. The young Comte de Rieux, last of his name, had succeeded in passing his guards, swimming the river, and reaching the wood of Kerso, where friends were waiting with disguises, when he was seen and shot by some blood thirsty soldiers. A pious lady placed him in the same tomb where, four centuries before, was laid one of his ancestors who perished in the battle of Auray. All those who emigrated under the age of fifteen, were to be pardoned. Young De Lage was pressed to escape by concealing his age, but asking "Is life worth an untruth?" he passed on to execution. It is worthy of note that no Bretons could be found to undertake the executions; Parisians were employed for the purpose

When no victims remained alive, all concerned in these deeds of crime fled hastily from the spot, and the bleaching bones of the martyrs, which had been hurriedly covered by earth, lay for many years untouched, "silent witnesses," beneath the holy heaven. No wonder the curse of God seems to rest on that bleak and cold morass; no wonder the imaginative peasant deems he still hears a sound of wailing lamentation, ceaselessly wafted even from the far-off storm-beaten shores and caves of Quiberon, where the restless sea murmurs an eternal reproach on the memories of those who planned and executed that fiendish massacre; no wonder the sons and daughters of France should weep over their national sin.

It was in 1814 that Monsieur Desharges, having purchased the empty monastery of Chartreuse, and established there a deaf and dumb school, under the care of some Grey Nuns, collected the abandoned remains of the Quiberon victims, and placed them in a vault of the old church. The Duc D'Angoulême, then travelling in Brittany, came to pray in the chapel, and conceived the idea of

building over them a suitable tomb. A royal commission was appointed to collect subscriptions towards it, and all France awoke to the necessity of raising an expiatory chapel on the spot where the victims fell, and a sepulchral one where their bones are buried. In 1829, both these chapels were inaugurated with great ceremony, by many dignitaries of the Church and people, and in the presence of 200 banners of communes, and an assembly of 20,000 people. The sepulchral chapel is built against that of Chartreuse; on the portico is the inscription “*Gallia merens possuit*, France in tears has raised it;” in the inside is a sarcophagus with the names of the murdered men, and some busts of their officers; on the walls are two very good marble bas-reliefs of the Duc D’Angoulême, praying beside the bones, and the Duchess laying the first stone of the chapel. The expiatory chapel is built close to the *Champs des Martyrs*, with the inscription “Here they fell;” a long avenue of pines is ended by a blue granite column, surmounted by a globe and cross. It seems a great pity that both these chapels, meant to

express the deepest feelings of pity and penitence, should be mere imitations of the old Greek temples.

Surely among the many lovely chapels that lie hidden in the valleys of Brittany, one might have been found more worthy of the occasion than a Pagan temple, which means nothing to us; for if architecture be a language, then it is impossible for the pure cold pillars, and flattened lines of the Greek, however well suited to their own clear, sunny skies, and heartless religion, bounded by things of this world, to express the higher and holier feelings of a Christian people so well as the Gothic, where the pointed arch, the high-peaked roof, the tall spire, the upward tendency of every line and leaf, strives to lift the soul from earthly desires to heavenly hopes.

The Morbihan peasant, however, does not trouble his mind in any degree about different styles—to him a church is a church, and the little Greek temple is being as speedily filled with tiny wax legs, and votive offerings, as any time-honoured village church in the country.

Mothers bring their sickly children to the Martyrs' Field, believing that the dew off the hallowed grass, on which was spilt the blood of martyred heroes, will strengthen their feeble limbs. Children in Brittany must be a peculiarly afflicted race, judging from the number of little wax legs, arms, and articles of infantine dress, that hung from every shrine, in every church, and flutter from every tomb or cross of any importance.

On our return to Hennebon, six leagues from Chartreuse, we found we had two hours to spare before proceeding to Lorient. Hennebon is very prettily situated, with its new white houses perched on the hill, peeping out of lichen-covered, and ruined old walls, or reflecting themselves in the calm river (over which a new bridge is nearly finished), that same river Blavet, up which the heroic Duchesse de Montfort, watching sick at heart, and almost hopeless, from her tower in the now ruined chateau, then besieged by Charles de Blois, saw the English advancing to her aid, and when the siege was raised, she came down, and kissed

her deliverers all round. This celebrated woman placed herself at the head of the army, when her husband was taken prisoner, and urged the troops to fight for his son. She had entrenched herself at Hennebon, and there gained the title of Jeanne la Flame, having set fire to the enemy's camp with her own hand. The ballad on this subject represents her as clapping her hands, and rejoicing over the "Frenchmen's bones that would make the good corn grow;" but history says she had to ride for her life after the exploit into Auray, to which place her good horse brought her safely, but many of her followers were taken. She made incredible exertions, however, collected some more soldiers, and marched into Hennebon again in triumph, in the face of the French army. The town was afterwards entered by treachery, and poor Jeanne was obliged to surrender, stipulating for the lives and treasure of the garrison. She had the satisfaction of finding out and hanging up the traitor in the castle before quitting it. This extraordinary heroine some time afterwards, in a naval engagement between French and

English, fought like a man. D'Argentre says, "Although she was so strong, and very good-looking, yet was she more gentle and modest than it is generally the nature of women to be." The Church at Hennebon, said to have been built by the English, rejoices in the name of Notre Dame du Paradis, is a very perfect building of the sixteenth century, and is being carefully repaired; one of the porches is richly carved. On a neighbouring house is a strangely carved stone of the Annunciation, which seems to be very old. About a league on the Vannes road is a curious round dolmen, with the peculiarity of having no alley leading to it. No traveller should neglect going to the ruins of the once important Abbey of La Joie, where still exists (I have been told, as we did not see it) a very curious wooden statue of Blanche of Champagne, founder of the building.

We took our places in the three-horse omnibus which was to convey us the remaining two leagues that lay between us and Lorient; the roads were heavy with recent rain, and we made but slow

progress. At last, Lorient (called by some enthusiastic French writers, "The Pearl of Morbihan set in gold,") was gained, and passing through the strongly fortified gates, we were deposited at the Hôtel de France, a very large, but not particularly comfortable abode. A wet Sunday here did not increase our affection for the place, though we managed to get out in the middle of the day, and found the whole town in agitation at the honour of a visit from the Bishop, who had performed mass there. Service was just over, crowds came running out of the church, joined by others in the street, and all united in a perfect mob, swarming round the carriage which was to bear away the dignitary; they followed him a considerable distance, in hopes of a blessing.

The church is not worth visiting, but for the sake of the Lady chapel, where a wreath of luminous stars round a marble Virgin is exceedingly pretty. The town is called by many the Key of Bretagne. The streets are irregular and poor-looking, and altogether we liked it less than any place we had yet seen. At every turn you meet

groups of sailors and soldiers ; the former exceedingly neatly dressed, with enormous blue shirt-collars, and very shiny round hats,—a very fine looking race of men, quite the picked men of the conscription, and nearly all natives of Brittany, which is the nursery for sailors in France, and accordingly, just now, of great importance to Government. Thinking the ramparts would afford a good view of the town, and also of the country beyond, we essayed to go there ; but were not allowed to do so by the sentry, lest we might prove dangerous spies, or perhaps take plans of the fortifications. An old gentleman decorated with a red ribbon, at our hotel, said it was different under the old *régime* ; he was then Superintendent of the place, and permitted any one to walk where they pleased. He remarked to us the number of English sounding names still extant in Brittany, of which his own was a specimen. I have since collected some of them,—such as St. Aubin, Morley, Valltort, Lascelles, Conquest, Morvan, &c. Bretons are very proud of the antiquity of their names, and declare that St. Paul (whom, they assert, preached

in Brittany), when he writes to Timothy, "Pudens and Claudia greet thee," alludes to an old Breton family. Surnames were common in Brittany in the eleventh century, long before we used them; for about a century later we find the daughter of Fitz Hamon refusing to marry the gentleman proposed to her until the King shall give him another name, saying—"It were to me a great shame to have a lord without'n his twa name." We ought certainly to take a great interest in Brittany, our ancestors have had so much to do with it. The Britons, whose name then signified "Painted Isle," established themselves in Armorica in 458. As an old writer in 1605 says; "Great also is the glorie of those Britans which, in most doleful time of the English invasion, withdrew themselves into the west parts of Gallia, then called Armorica; for they not only seated themselves there maugre the Romans (then indeede low and neare setting) and the French, but also imposed their name to the country, held and defended the same against the French until, in our grandfathers' memorie, it was united to France by the sacred bonds of matri-

monie." Since the time when the Britons settled in Armorica, they and the English seem to have been continually in contact, either as friends or foes. Arthur, our dearest hero of chivalry, appears to have spent quite as much of his life in Bretagne as in England. From Lorient, any one anxious to inspect more *menhirs* and *dolmens*, may take a boat and sail to the Island of Groix; here are many Druidic remains, more or less mutilated, and also magnificent caves, hollowed out by the ceaseless beat of water, where the waves of the sea, dashing against the roof, resound in thunderings heard for miles around, and when borne on the wings of a winter gale, causing weird thoughts to rise at midnight, in the minds of peaceful villagers in far-off hamlets, of chained demons in enchanted caves.

Next morning we tried to secure places in the diligence for Quimper, but found it impossible to do so, either for that day or the next; so in despair, we settled on going by a small diligence which started at four in the afternoon to Quimperlé, five leagues off, and thence per carriage to

Quimper. This being satisfactorily arranged, and our places taken, we determined to go per steamer to Port Louis, at the mouth of the Bay of Lorient. There was nothing to be seen there,—Port Louis is a very quiet, stagnant place ; Lorient carries off all the shipping and extra business,—but anything was better than waiting all day at that disagreeable Lorient. Steamers go to and from Port Louis every hour, and the fare there and back is but five-pence ; we reached it in half an hour, and strolled about and found the usual amount of fortifications,—cannon lying everywhere, and telegraph posts being erected. We were allowed to walk on one part of the ramparts, but were summoned down from another.

Nora and I went on to the rocks as the tide was out, in quest of actinia, and sea treasures, but not a vestige of life could we see beyond two or three mes, anemones, and sea-weed of the commonest kind, which some peasants were collecting ; so we returned to sit under the trees near the quay, and patiently awaited the arrival of the steamboat, which carried us back to Lorient in plenty time

for the Quimperlé diligence. In it we met a splendid specimen of a Breton farmer, with such a merry twinkle in his keen blue eyes; he was so enormously stout, that he had great difficulty in ascending and descending the vehicle. A nice looking country woman with him began asking us about England; they could form no idea of distance, never having been farther than a few miles from their native village; they could hardly believe we actually had cows like their own, and so many things the same. The good woman pulled a letter out of her pocket, saying it came from her husband, who was cook on board a French ship, and she wished to know where Senegal (from whence his letter was dated) might be; she had asked at the post-office in Lorient, but they could not tell her. She seemed greatly astonished at our knowing where it was, and also finding out from the postmarks that her letter had been six months *en route*, and duly respected us more than the authorities at Lorient for our superior geographical knowledge. Their French was rather difficult to make out, being freely inter-

spersed with Breton words and exclamations. The old farmer strongly advised us not to attempt learning their language, it was so very difficult; he had taken two years to master French, and he knew Breton was a far harder tongue to acquire. A Breton girl had before this presented me with a vocabulary of French and Breton, and I had quite determined, after a very short inspection of its pages, that it would be a hopeless waste of time to think of studying it.

The night had fairly closed in ere we reached Quimperlé, having quitted the district of Morbihan and entered that of Finisterre, the wildest and most uncivilized part of Brittany. We took up our quarters at the Lion d'Or, the former residence of the Abbots of St. Croix. It is a rambling, ghostly old house, and at present only inhabited by the landlady and a *bonne*. Quimperlé, like many other French towns, was at one time fortified, but all remains of its defences were destroyed in 1680. Historians recount with triumph how, in 1372, the English garrison placed there by Jean IV., Duke of Bretagne, were

ignominiously chased by the sword of Duguesclin the valiant, and speedily forced to evacuate the town. The church of St. Croix is so surrounded by buildings that it is scarcely observable from the outside, but on entering, it struck us as the most curious we had ever seen. As shown by Monsieur de Freminville, it boasts of a very ancient origin. He says, "Though the Duke Alain Caignart is the reputed founder of the abbey, it is certain that it existed long before his day, and he simply repaired and made considerable additions to it in the eleventh century. The charters and grants of the abbey, which we have consulted in the original manuscript, give as its founder, in 550, St. Gunthiern, a king of Cambria, who embraced Christianity, and renouncing the pleasures of the world, retired to the wilds of Armorica, leading an edifying life of holiness.

The interior of the church bears a great resemblance to the ancient pagan temples. Built in a circular form, the choir in the centre considerably elevated above the pavement, and approached by several steps, the long straight windows, pierced

high up in the walls, all recall the temples of the latter days of the Roman empire. Under the edifice is found a very remarkable crypt, with its low roof, its full, sweeping arches, supported by heavy pillars, the capitals of which are grotesquely decorated. To one of these pillars are attached the iron chains with which St. Gurlot was bound when suffering martyrdom in this subterranean vault; his tomb still exists, near the pillar to which he was chained; his statue is also shown, but evidently of far more recent date than the death of the saint, having been erected in the fifteenth century. In the sarcophagus is a hole: here, on certain *fête* days, infirm people insert their arms, in hopes of a miraculous cure."

The monks of Quimperlé had a great quarrel with those of Redon about Belle Isle, which both abbeys claimed as their special property; the subject was stormily debated from 1119 till 1172, when the discussion was ended by the Quimperlé monks keeping Belle Isle, and giving up a priory at Nantes to Redon.

Louis of Spain brought his fleet, in 1342, to

the town, and ravaged the country round, till Walter de Mannay, after the relief of Hennebon, defeated the Spanish army (chiefly by the aid of his English archers), so that out of six thousand men only three hundred escaped. The English were amazed at the quantity of booty they found in the ships.

At a short distance from the town, on the side towards the sea, extends the forest of Carnoet, the largest in Finistère: here stands a tumulus in which were found, between flat stones, rings and collars of massive gold, silver ornaments for lances, and spear-heads of flint, leading to the supposition that it was the burial-place of some chief or warrior.

After we had left Quimperlé, we regretted extremely not having made an excursion to Le Faout, close to which, we were told, stands a lovely chapel of the fifteenth century, dedicated to St. Fiacre. This exquisite piece of workmanship is fast falling into decay; its painted windows are broken, and its carved screen powdering into dust, and unless speedily rescued from destruction it will soon become a ruin.

We had engaged a carriage, the evening prior to our departure from Quimperlé, to take us on to Quimper, eleven leagues, for which we paid twenty-five francs; it was to be at the hotel by eight o'clock, but no signs of a conveyance appearing at that hour, we went to the owner's house, and after wasting a great deal of time, the horse was led out and almost harnessed, when they discovered one of his shoes was missing, and we had to wait with what patience we could, till the loss had been repaired at the blacksmith's forge; this was the more provoking, as we were most anxious to get into Quimper early, before the post-office closed, as we expected to find letters there, and especially one of the greatest importance to us, containing a bank-post bill. We had started from Rennes with what we considered an ample supply of money, but found it fast disappearing, and often 'speculated on what we should do if our funds failed altogether before reaching Quimper, where a further supply awaited us. We had bought very few extras on the way (considering our temptations), and far from being extravagant,

regarded ourselves as models of economy ; but the tariff of prices varied so much in different places that anything like a probable estimate of expenses was impossible.

At last the horse was pronounced fit to take the road, and we departed at ten, instead of eight, o'clock. About midday we reached the pretty little village of Rosporden, situated on the borders of a lake, the finest in this department. The river Aven, which is said to spring from this lake, contains bivalve shells, in which very nice pearls are frequently found of a good shape and colour. The owner of a manor in the neighbourhood has a box full, which he has collected himself, but no one appears to take the trouble of searching regularly for them. The church stands, surrounded by trees, on a little promontory jutting into the lake, altogether forming a pleasant little picture, enhanced by the strange figures of men in their national dress, more picturesque than any we had hitherto seen ; besides, it was a fair-day, and the costumes were unusually varied. We could scarcely drive up to the hotel, where we spent an hour,

before we could tear ourselves away from the window, contemplating the animated scene beneath us. Just under the windows were groups of people selling round lumps of dark brown stuff on sacks, that we supposed to be dried beef, till a woman coming up to inspect them, a hole was made in one lump, and she poked her fingers down to the bottom, to ascertain its condition and quality, which did not appear to be satisfactory, as the hole was patted down again, with the addition of a little mud, which lay thick in the street; and the woman having wiped her hands on the nearest cow's back, proceeded to try another lump, stopping for a moment to pinch energetically an officious pig who would come in her way. After seeing this scene two or three times repeated, we discovered the abominable compound was lard put into skins, and commiserated the poor creatures who were doomed to eat it eventually, which, however, they would doubtless do with great complacency, so our pity was useless. The girls looked exceedingly neat, with their nice dark cloth dresses, embroidered boddices fitting them marvellously,

and their snowy caps scrupulously hiding every scrap of hair. One cannot wonder that Breton girls are glad to sell their hair, or get rid of it in any way; long locks must be a perfect nuisance to them, when each stray hair has to be so carefully shrouded from sight; they really seem to believe nature made a mistake in giving them such a useless ornament. Most of them think it exceedingly immodest to show an atom of it in public, and fancy that such a display would lower their character for ever in the commune, and ruin their hopes of a good settlement. It is amusing to see the difference of opinion between the two sexes, for the men take a great pride in cultivating their *chevelure*, and their long glossy tresses are quite enviable; they shave the temples and top of the head, the rest is left to its own free will. Some of the young men catch up their hair and push it under their hats while working; and then the neck, from being always covered, is so white compared to their faces, that the contrast is startling. No privation will induce a peasant to part with his hair; and I have been told that recruits weep, as we should

say, "like girls," when their tresses are cut off on entering the army. I was surprised to see so many shades of chestnut, and so few heads of black hair, and also to see, on the whole, how well they were kept, though we did come across some matted manes that must have been hopelessly entangled for months, nay years. Perhaps the hair merchants, when they come round to gather their harvest in Brittany, may refuse to buy men's hair, which is most likely coarse, and these merchants are exceedingly particular about the quality of the article they purchase; and I have been assured, become so expert that they can distinguish at a touch the difference between masculine and feminine hair. These men had their *bragous* (full trousers) carefully quilted with very fine runnings, quite low down, so that all the fulness bagged out just at the knee (the needlework displayed on these garments must sorely tax the patience of the village tailor), and this peculiarity, added to an inimitable way they have of hitching on their clothes, gives them a singularly slouching air. A great contrast to the tidy, spruce look of the

women. These men wore their hat brims rather smaller than the Morbihan peasants did. The lads sported gay-coloured ribbons and little black feathers, sometimes even flowers in their hats; occasionally you saw a big brim turned up at one side, or both, like a beadle's hat, which was meant as a sort of advertisement that the wearer was a widower on the look-out for another helpmate.

The church at Rosporden is a heavy Gothic building. In the porch were collected several curious wooden statues, some very quaint and old, others quite modern. A gate in the churchyard overlooked an open place where a cattle-fair was going on; and while I was striving to sketch a few of the busy, shifting groups, some one discovered our presence, and instantly such a number of wild-looking, long-haired men crowded to the gate, that we thought it safest to retreat.

I thought we never should get out of Rosporden; the buyers and sellers—calmly or fiercely, as the case might be—continuing their bargains with the horse's head touching their shoulders, keeping us

in a state of terror which by no means extended to them. Of course there were plenty of beggars, reaping a rich harvest of copper. One great advantage the French coinage possesses over ours is the number of small copper pieces; many peasants who could not afford to give a beggar a whole sous, will present him with one of these fractional coins, and by the end of the day he has quite a collection of them. Some of these beggars have very fine heads, and their costumes present such a motley assemblage of indescribable garments, they would make splendid studies for an artist. I was often struck by the dignified manner in which a blind old man would lift his sightless eyes to heaven before thanking you for your charity; it was a kind of instant acknowledgment to the Giver of all good that was too natural not to be truthful, and very different from the practised gabble of a professional beggar. The religion of a Breton peasant is so completely a part of his being, that although deeply sunk in debasing superstition, I believe in that day when all differing creeds shall be alike unveiled, his simple faith will shame

many of us, who with greater light have heavier responsibilities.

Our next halt was at the hamlet of St. Yvi, where we alighted to visit the church, embosomed in venerable yew-trees : we could not enter it, as, contrary to the general custom, it was locked up. There is a pretty charnel-house in the churchyard, with Gothic arches, where piles of bones and skulls have been collected while making new graves.

At the summit of a long winding hill we caught our first glimpse of the delicate spires of Quimper, nestling in the valley beneath ; the road wound in and out, giving us exquisite peeps of scenery, the whole lighted up with rosy and golden tints from the setting sun. As its last rays were tipping the cathedral spires we entered the town, and stopping at the Hotel de L'Epée, we at once started for the post-office, and were considerably relieved at finding, besides home news, the important letter with the bill, our pecuniary difficulties having reached a culminating point which threatened us with absolute indigence, for we actually entered Quimper with a sum which, after paying for our carriage

and driver, left us four francs and a half wherewith to continue our expedition.

I think Quimper, without exception, the prettiest town in all Basse Bretagne. It must be only the distance which prevents more English families from going there; it is situated, as its name imports, on the confluence of two rivers, the Steir and the Odet. Its quaint yet comfortable houses on one side of the river, and a very fine wood, which comes down to the water's edge, on the other, forming a lovely promenade; the winding, picturesque river, with its many masts and pleasure-boats; the neighbouring hills, all bosky and wooded, in the midst of which the town is set like a jewel; and the exquisite cathedral, with its two tall delicate spires piercing the sky, all form a picture of extreme beauty. Gentlemen here have the advantage of very good fishing and shooting; game is plentiful and cheap: you get a hare for a franc, a rabbit for ten sous, and a partridge for six sou; and most of the families round, finding themselves overrun with game, are thankful to any one who will shoot it.

Among the many celebrated *fêtes* and *pardons* round Quimper, one deserves especial mention.

In winter, when the river Steir is frozen over, the people collect together, pitch tents, have torches, and dance all night on the ice, which must have a wonderful effect, when you consider the number and variety of costumes the peasants around indulge in; they are an unending source of amusement. Both men and women vie with each other in the gorgeousness of their colouring, and the beauty of their ribbons and embroidery. Some of the girls wear pale-blue fly-away caps, sometimes made of blue muslin, but often of white, made very blue in washing; they also wear large muslin collars, crimped and plaited, some in large ruffs, and some laid down flat—they must be very troublesome to keep neat and uncrushed.

The different kinds of caps are perfectly endless; nothing but elaborately-coloured plates could do them any justice. The dresses are more alike, a very full skirt of dark cloth, and a wide apron with big pockets; the sleeve fits loosely to the arm, with turned-back cuffs and coloured edges;

the boddice is cut very low and open in front, with a broad stripe of coloured embroidery or binding, and buttons, only joined just at the waist with a lacing of yellow cord; the chest is covered with a tight breastplate of cloth, also



ENVIRONS OF QUIMPER.

bound and embroidered. In some villages the whole dress is one colour; in others, the sleeves, body, and breastplate are studiously contrasted.

The form of the collar varies with the cap. But it is useless attempting to describe a thing which changes like a kaleidoscope ; and, however insignificant it may seem to us, the alteration of a peak or turn in her dress from the old undeviating model, would cause as much annoyance to the eye of a peasant woman as a false note of music to a lady possessing a true ear. Nearly every Breton girl wears her most cherished ornament, a silver or gold cross, tied round her neck with black velvet. Some of the better class of the *pennerez*, or girls eligible for marriage, have several black velvet ribbons, with bead ends, streaming from under their caps, exactly what we wore a year or two ago, and, in a modified form, do still.

I was often struck by the number of fashions we seem to have borrowed from Brittany ; for instance, mousquetaire sleeves have their origin there ; the velvet binding ladies now wear round the bottom of their dresses has been the mode time out of mind in many villages. I would recommend to the attention of milliners the wide

armholes and narrow backs, which have the advantage of being decidedly new and *bizarre* looking. The gold cord which I remember some gentlemen used to wear round their waistcoats, has been worn by Bretons for the last century; and you meet every possible description of wide-awake, from the most extensive mushroom to the most nattily turned-up Spanish. The men round Quimper have a great field for the display of taste in the colouring of their dresses, as they sport three waistcoats of different lengths and colours, besides a coat and big *bragous* (much wider here than at Rosporden); and as all these varied garments are bound with some brightly contrasting colours, it must cost a young peasant many a sleepless night before he can arrange a perfectly unexceptional holiday suit. No wonder the village tailor is a man of such importance. Most of the peasants have some elaborately embroidered ornament on the back of their coats, sometimes a cross with rays to it, sometimes a sacramental chalice.

Both men and women in full dress discard the noisy *sabot* of working days, and appear in neat

black shoes with huge silver buckles. The girls, as a general rule, though having neat, small hands, had very large feet; but that was most likely the fault of their *chaussure*; the smallest foot in the world would look hideous in a very thick, loose, home-knitted stocking, covered by a village-made list shoe, and the whole encased in enormous wooden *sabots*. The peasants in the south are much more talkative, gay, and polite than those in the north of Finisterre; they are not so miserably poor, nor is their religion of such a gloomy cast. The chief food of the northern peasant is the tasteless *galette*, a kind of under-done black pancake, made of buckwheat; the *galettes* of the south are called *crêpe*; they are made with butter, and baked very thin and crisp; any one who has watched the process of making crumpets will easily understand the manufacture of *crêpe*.

Before talking to these country-people, one should get up a few facts relating to the price of bread and meat per pound at different times of the year in England, and such subjects,

as I found myself two or three times posed by the questions of some practical woman, whose ideas were bounded by such subjects. We were often asked, "Are your cattle like ours? Have you any corn in England?" This question I could triumphantly answer, with the additional information that we "never grew black corn," as they call buckwheat. Sometimes they inquired, "Is it true, that with you servants wear bonnets, and imitate the dress of their mistresses?" and, as the difference of dress in France was a barrier which even the revolution could not destroy, the affirmative answer I was obliged to give to this question evidently presented to their minds a sad spectacle of more than republican freedom. We often tried to describe the extreme neatness and cleanliness of our villages as compared with Breton ones; but sometimes my vision of bright, tidy, English cottages would be marred by a recollection of the dirty slatternly women I have seen standing in their doorways, as I felt they could hardly bear a comparison with the neat, dark dresses, and always snowy caps of the women

around us. How they succeed in preserving their personal tidiness in the midst of such adverse circumstances I cannot conceive; and how a mother can contrive, besides her day's hard work, in keeping two or three little children in white caps as well as herself, is still more marvellous.

Quimper is about the best place to study the Breton in all his different aspects; and among its other *agréments*, certainly not the least is its lovely cathedral, the largest and most perfect in Brittany; it was begun in 1424. The church has one great peculiarity,—the choir slants off to the right, a formation meant by the architect to express the leaning of our Saviour's head to one side. I liked the effect very much; for standing in the nave, you see the pillars of the choir round away so much, that the end is lost, and the church looks very long in consequence. There is no old painted glass left, but two modern windows have been put in, one to St. Anne, and one representing Bishop Gravelin, recently deceased, presenting a model of his cathedral to the Virgin; underneath the window is his tomb and that of

a very old abbess, broken at the revolution. There is a lovely marble statue of the Virgin and Child behind the altar. A modern statue of King Grallon has been placed over the doorway to replace the original, destroyed in the revolution, which was the subject of a curious annual ceremony, alluding, it is said, to the introduction of the vine in this king's reign:—a man mounting to the platform, offered a glass of wine to the statue, and then drinking it himself, flung the empty glass down among the assembled people, who scrambled for it; had it been recovered whole, the bishop would have paid the possessor a hundred crowns; but as it was always broken, the forfeit was never demanded.

The ancient bishops of Quimper were temporal princes, and had a right to half of everything in the town that belonged to the dukes, even to the city walls; they were very independent. Osgar, bishop in 1029, married in spite of all opposition, and his wife carried her dignity so far as to refuse to rise in the presence of the Countess Judit, an insult which that proud princess resented so deeply

that it eventually cost the bishop a portion of his land to appease the quarrel.

Round the environs of Quimper are many chateaux of historical interest and ruined churches; among the latter, one belonging to the Knights Templars, "Temple of the False Gods," as the people were taught to call them when the tide of persecution rose and overwhelmed the knights. About five leagues off is the old town of Concarneau, which sustained many sieges, and in 1377 it was held by an English garrison, who were all put to death by Duguesclin. Round the town are many curious Celtic remains; among others a large tract of *menhirs*, known in the county by a Breton name signifying the "Place of Grief and Mourning," which would surely seem to designate a cemetery. Quimper was the first place where we were requested to put our names down in the hotel book; all through Brittany we were never once asked for our passports, though my aunt always carried them in a steel-clasped bag, from which she never separated. There are such constant changes, however, in the internal administration of

French affairs, that it would be dangerous to reckon on any precedent.

We had engaged a *voiturier* to take us to the ruined city of Penmarch and the Pointe du Raz, occupying three days, for eighty francs, which we did not think dear, as he was to leave us at Cha-teaulin, a stage on our way towards Brest ; and the next morning saw us waiting for our tardy coachman, who thought anything within the hour named sufficiently punctual. I had time to get a pretty sketch of the river before he made his appearance with a close conveyance of very primitive form: as it had been the private carriage of Bishop Gravelin of blessed memory, it was impossible for us to object to it ; but as the interior was exceedingly small, Nora took her seat on the box, and we started, to the great edification of all the hotel people and about twenty gentlemen, who had turned out to see us off. Whichever road you take in leaving Quimper, you must ascend a steep hill for about three miles, but the lovely view you get all that time amply repays you. Any one taking this excursion ought to insist on going to

Loch Tudy: we did not, and thereby lost seeing the church, which is the oldest and best preserved in Brittany. It dates from the fifth century, and is entirely Roman, having circular chapels and massive pillars, with grotesque and barbarous figures in the capitols; it was for some time in the hands of the Templars, who have left their Oriental crosses stamped on some of the columns.

The little town of Pont l'Abbé is chiefly remarkable for the singular head-dress of the women. This pretence of a cap is only a small long-shaped bit of linen, standing up over the forehead and pinched into three peaks; the middle one always embroidered. The head is covered by a tight skull-cap, and the hair brushed over it behind. They also wear a loose ill-fitting jacket with several rows of yellow binding round the top, looking like an infinity of necklaces.

The old women sitting at their doo rs spinning looked quite eastern. I could not understand at first why so many of them wore a short bead chain, with a ring at the end fastened to their left shoulder, but saw afterwards, they stuck their

distaffs through the ring when walking. Pont l'Abbé used to boast a very fine old Carmelite convent of the fourteenth century, but when we asked where it was, the coachman pointed to a very ugly modern house which has usurped its place. The nuns, forty in number, had just entered their new abode; he had assisted in driving them, and was obliged to go quite inside the courtyard, that no passer-by might catch a glimpse of the sisters. The object of which proceeding he could not understand.

It is two leagues from this to Penmarch, and on the way you pass three *dolmens*; on the top of one are to be found four of those mysterious round cavities which are so puzzling to all *savants*. There are also two menhirs; one, about twenty-one feet high, is so singularly shaped, it looks like a petrified giant in a ghostly shroud stalking across the plain. I had declared nothing should tempt me to look at any more Druid stones, but there is a fascination about their rude simplicity that compels your attention.

The flat sandy plain of Penmarch is entirely

covered with ruins for more than a square league. You may wander for hours among deserted houses, and the long low walls of what once were trim gardens, gay with well-watched flowers; nothing but turf and lichen-covered stones are left now. It would be a city of the dead, were it not for a few fishermen who live in the deserted houses nearest Penmarch Church; they look miserably poor and hopelessly idle: some women were listlessly shaking up the heaps of drying sea-weed, but the men and boys only lounged about. This seaweed is exceedingly valuable: the peasants are only allowed to gather it in between sunrise and sunset; if any are caught taking it after or before these hours, they are committed to prison. When dried, it is sent to Nantes and many large towns, where it is used for manufacturing purposes.

Our coachman drove us nearly up to what was once the Templars' Church of Kerity, and then turned us over to a guide who was said to speak French, but being, I suppose, a man of taciturn disposition, he never vouchsafed a word to us; indeed, he seemed so much alarmed at the onerous

duties imposed on him, that he lighted his pipe at once, and always kept about twenty yards in advance of us, sometimes striding on so fast we were left far behind, in which case he leaned against a wall till we appeared again. The Templars' church is a lovely ruin; a round watch-tower at one end, and a row of pointed windows down one side only, are its chief characteristics. The interior was superbly fitted up; the altar and all the decorations being in alabaster. The only remains of all this magnificence is a statue of St. John, at present in the church at Penmarch, and some scraps of carving in another chapel. We stayed so long here examining the altar, &c., that our guide came back to see what had become of us, and then conducted us to one of the best preserved of the old houses. As the town was not fortified, each householder intrenched himself behind walls, and had a round tower, and a well in the court, a little fortress in miniature, to repel the sudden invasion of pirates or English. Over this door was a shield, bearing a spread eagle; most of these houses





ANCIENT CROSS AT PENMARSH.

have the dates of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

No less than six churches are left to mark by their size and importance the prosperity of Penmarch, viz. the Templars of Kerity, St. Pierre, La Joie, St. Guenolé, St. Fiacre, and Penmarch proper; and to each of these in succession we followed our silent guide, only objecting when he wished us to ascend the lighthouse: as the point of Penmarch is as flat as the coast of Holland, there was no object in gaining a more extended view of it. I sketched a beautiful ruined cross with figures at its foot, and then we tried the different doors of La Joie, which was quite close, but without success, a proceeding which roused our guide, who was watching from a safe distance to say something that might be understood as *fermé*; so we trudged on over the hot sandy plain, and through long turf-covered streets which still bear as if in mockery the names that distinguished them in their palmy days of prosperity, as Goldsmith's-street, Merchant's-street, &c., when busy crowds hurried to and fro, when toiling trains wove golden dreams,

and when human hearts wept over their vanished hopes, just the old round as it has been from the beginning and will be to the end.

The superb ruin of St. Guenolé is the most imposing object that breaks the uniformity of the scene ; its massive and unfinished square tower has been richly sculptured, and you can distinguish the high prows and grotesque shapes of those queer old middle-age ships in which our bold ancestors placed their trust, resembling nothing of modern days unless it be a Chinese junk. Ancient Penmarch owed her riches to these eccentric-looking ships ; her inhabitants were the boldest mariners of the age, and carried on a large trade with Spain, besides having immense herring and mackerel fisheries, and almost an exclusive monopoly of cod-fishing. The fame of their great wealth attracted all the labourers of the country, who, abandoning their fields, flew to this new Golconda just as our people flock to the gold diggings, till Government was obliged to interfere, fearing agriculture would be altogether stopped. The first blow to the prosperity of the city was the discovery of Newfound-

land in 1500 ; cod-fish deserted their old haunts round the point of Penmarch, and half her population followed them. Her trade in corn and wine was still flourishing ; but so many English pirates made incursions on the rich and defenceless city as to disgust most of its remaining inhabitants, who quitted their homes in consequence, and the ravages of the notorious Fontenelle completed its ruin ; it was left as we now see it, to be the haunt of seamews, and the abode of a few poor fishermen. We find La Dame de Penmarch appearing as governess to the son of Francis II., whose birth was hailed with such rejoicings, but who died in infancy, although his mother vowed his weight in gold to Notre Dame de Carnes, and his father searched the whole country round for relics.

Across a barren plain, covered with huge granite boulders, which must have been submerged in the sea (at no very distant period, as even to my unlearned eyes the marks of water chafing on the stones were very perceptible,) were we taken to the Pointe la Torche (which signifies wolf), where an enormous block of granite has been detached from

its neighbour, and when the sea lashed into fury by winter storms enters the fissure, the thundering roar of its waves may be heard echoing up to Quimper ; nay, some assert they have detected its far-off roll from Rennes ! a distance of fifty leagues. The country name of the rocks is Taliverne ; they are very splendid and covered with magnificent sea-weeds. Rare and curious shells are found here, but we could get none for sale, and of course were unable to hunt for ourselves. I could gladly have spent a long day among them ; but poor travellers are always slaves to time, and we were obliged to retrace our steps. Many little boys followed us begging, a faculty which comes naturally to a Breton ; not understanding French, they paid no attention to our replies, but vociferously continued to repeat the only word they cared to learn, " Sous, sous," of which coin they suppose travellers to carry an unlimited supply.

We got back to the little hotel very much wearied, and thankful we had followed the coachman's suggestions, and ordered lunch to be ready for our return ; we were told afterwards the walk

we had taken was at least six miles, so we had a right to be tired. Lunch was very neatly served to us in a tidy little bedroom, the small hotel not boasting a *salon*. The host, who came up to talk to us during the repast, was a man of some intelligence, who had served in the artillery; he also believed he had been in England, but his England turned out to be Corfu. He said they had many French, but very few English visitors, and during the Italian war no travellers at all came near them; like every one who spoke on the subject, he deeply deplored that war. After lunch, we went over Penmarch Church with our host, who has charge of it; it is a large, heavy building, in which service is held every Sunday. There is a fine east window, which has several old heraldic bearings still blazoned on it, and there are two old tombs, one of some bishop, out of which two skulls were taken, which are now placed in a little *bénitier*.

The altar ornaments are very rich; one silver cross weighs 30,000 kilograms. Near the altar is a huge solemn white figure with the long stiff drapery of the middle ages; this I instantly recognised as

the alabaster St. John from the Templars' Church, much to the astonishment of our host, who could not conceive how we knew anything about it : his respect for our guide-book was much increased by my insisting on seeing a window composed of three stone *fleur-de-lis*, which after some trouble we found beside the doorway, and he agreed with Mons. Fréminville, "It must have been very difficult to cut." The word Penmarch signifies "head of a horse," so there is a large stone one over the door; and outside the church are carved many of those old-fashioned ships to which the town owed so much.

We got back to Quimper very late, and too tired to think of dinner; but Madame gave us a most refreshing tea up in our own rooms.

Five o'clock next morning saw us dressing hastily, as we were, if possible, to start before six, having a long day's journey to perform, of about sixteen leagues. We were by this time too much accustomed to starting at these unearthly hours to make the faintest objection, knowing it was useless. We took a last look of Quimper



PEASANTS FROM PONT CROIX.

on a dull grey morning, when the tall cathedral spires were standing out quite black against the blood-red sky, and went on our way with sad forebodings that our lovely bright weather was coming to a close. The first village we stopped at was Landudec, where two large barrels were placed in the gutter, the black stream of which was dammed up for the occasion with mud. On asking what they contained, we were informed they were full of honey, put there to cool and settle. The roads were enlivened by peasants going to a large fair at Pont Croix; and as we passed one gay group after another, we had ample opportunities of studying their peculiar and fanciful dresses. The girls wear caps which are an improved edition of the Pont l'Abbé ones. Their dresses are very pretty: three petticoats of graduated lengths and contrasted colours, each with a brilliant yellow or red binding, the upper skirt generally of some linen material, carefully ironed in plaits the whole length; a tight-fitting body, profusely embroidered in front; long white sleeves, and a short loose jacket just reaching under

the arm, with epaulette sleeves, worked all round. Their very shoes are bound with some bright colour. It would make a very pretty fancy dress, with the exception of the cap, which must be exceedingly hot. The men discard the many waistcoats of Quimper, and wear tight knitted dark blue shirts, with a very short open jacket, embroidered all round. The wide-spread hats grow smaller and smaller, till, in the north of Finisterre, they disappear altogether.

Among the various parties wending their way to the fair, was a young lady from some more fashionable region, who, disdaining peasants' attire, found the greatest difficulty in keeping her huge crinoline within the bounds of the small market-cart she was seated in, presenting a most ridiculous appearance, which our driver pronounced as "*vraiment dégoûtant*."

There are ten leagues between Quimper and Audierne, near which town you pay a toll of eleven sous at the suspension-bridge over the river Goyen.

Audierne is entirely a fishing-town, and carries

on a considerable trade in dried skate and stock-fish. On the Pointe du Loch near it is a large Druidical sanctuary, about a hundred yards long in which you are particularly requested to remark that the stones are embedded in rough mason-work, instead of being, as usual, just stuck in the soil. This is the only one of the kind in Brittany.

We breakfasted at Audierne, and bespoke dinner and rooms for the night; and as soon as fresh horses had been found, we started, in rather a melancholy manner, for the Pointe du Raz; for the warning prophecy of the red sunrise had been speedily fulfilled, and such a heavy rain was falling, that our coachman deputed the honour of driving us to another man, who, not speaking much French, was not a very good guide; on we went, however, determinately. The road is good enough, though the hills are very steep. Two sturdy little chesnuts pulled us up bravely. We were often obliged to admit the superiority of these hardy Breton horses over ours. After the longest day's work, they are turned out at

once into the fields, in the coldest weather. No one thinks of rubbing them down, or looking after them in the smallest degree. They get very little corn to eat, and are always expected to go from thirty to sixty miles a day. Swelled legs, and the numberless other miseries that make our horses so often useless, are unknown here. A Breton horse is always supposed to be ready for his work, and he generally sets to it with thorough good-will. Some of them are exceedingly pretty ; and we often longed to transplant them across the water, where most likely, however, they would soon be made as delicate as our own ponies unfortunately are.

We passed here and there a few villages with stunted cultivation round them, and some churches ; but anything more dreary, wild, and desolate-looking than the whole promontory cannot well be imagined. There are some Celtic remains scattered about, but indeed the whole of the Pointe du Raz is legendary ground ; and that modern superstition may not find herself forgotten, here is the little chapel of Notre Dame de bonne

Voyage, where once a year all the surrounding population assemble, bringing their offerings of cattle, corn, &c., and pray for "the friends who are far away," and deem their various journeys will be greatly expedited by the ceremony.

It is about four leagues from Audierne to the lighthouse at the end of the Point. On the road we picked up several boys, who hung on to the carriage, laughing, and in high good humour, expecting "sous," the only French word they attempted to say. As it was too wet for them to find amusement elsewhere, the appearance of a carriage was hailed with delight, and the whole troop followed us. At length, in the midst of a drenching shower, the vehicle stopped on a bleak common, and the coachman opened the door. "Is this the place?" we exclaimed, in consternation. "Yes, we can go no farther," said he, scarcely able to restrain a smile. (The insane desire of travellers to go and see places where there is nothing to be seen always strikes these people as very ridiculous.) There was not an atom of shelter in sight, except the tall light-

house before us, from the door of which the old man in charge made a dash down to invite our entrance, and quickly returned to his retreat. So with a glance at the pitiless rain and sky, which gave no hopes of a change, Nora and I bravely descended, and ran into the lighthouse. We talked to the poor old man for a little while; he was very lonely, and told us of the numberless wrecks he remembered seeing before the light was placed here. And now, even with two light-houses, the passage between the Ile de Sein and the Point is so dangerous, that ships are constantly lost; a French frigate perished there not long since.

The old guardian had been a sailor, and told us he had visited England, where he knew an admiral and his family; but on questioning him a little closer, we found that, as usual with all Bretons, England meant any foreign place where English faces were seen, and he had only been to Rio Janeiro. We tried to get him to speak about the legends of the Point, but on those subjects he was dumb; so after with difficulty persuading him to accept some money for *tabac*,

we determined to brave the weather. Tying our hats firmly on, as it was too stormy to hold up an umbrella, we ran over the soaked and spongy heather, followed by two or three of the boldest boys, to see the jagged and broken line of formidable rocks that fringe this promontory; among them is one awful cavern, called the Mouth of Hell, through which the waters of the ocean force their way by some underground passage, and are dashed up high in the air with fearful violence. Past these dark and frowning cliffs a tremendous sea rolls in from the eternal swell of the Atlantic, into that dreaded and dangerous spot which the boldest seaman dares not pass without a prayer, the "Bay of the Departed;" hundreds of tall ships have "veiled their topsails" in the sands of this disastrous shore, and the bones of many hundred sailors lie strewn beneath the treacherous waves of that unquiet sea. Those whose avocations take them down upon the lonely shores of this melancholy bay, often hear borne on the howling wind the wailing cries of the departed, rising above the roar of the waves that engulfed

them, and see their white ghostly forms gleaming faintly over their watery graves.

It had been a fixed purpose in our minds before leaving home to land, if possible, on the "storied Isle of Sein," which is easily done in fine weather by taking a boat from Audierne; but our resolution was not proof against such a steady down-pour of rain; indeed I do not suppose any boatman would have put out in such a stormy day, even if our courage had not failed. It would have been too provoking to have left the Point without even seeing the island from a distance; but fortunately, at this moment, as if in answer to our hopes, the thick grey veil of mist which obscured the horizon was slowly uplifted, so as to give us a momentary glimpse of the isle and its lighthouse, and then silently fell down again, blotting it completely out.

On the Island of Sein (which signifies *old man*) was in olden time placed a College of Druids, or as some assert Druidesses, though Fréminville positively denies that statement.* There seems no

* Priestesses in Sein rendered the same worship to Ceres and Proserpine that was offered in Samothrace.—LOBINEAU'S *Histoire de Bretagne*, 1711.

doubt, however, that it was to Sein the shivering souls of the departed were taken on their way to their appointed abodes, for slumbering boatmen from the coast were often roused in the dead of night by some invisible power, and ordered to "bear their spectral load from Gaul;" they were compelled to ferry their deeply-laden boats across to Sein, where the disembodied spirits were landed, and the trembling and awe-stricken boatmen returned home with their boats sensibly lightened as to weight, though neither going or coming could their dull mortal eyes perceive any tangible form either entering or leaving them.

Near this same Point also once stood the fabled city of Is, which was miraculously submerged in the fifth century on account of the crimes of its inhabitants. This famous city, the theme of many a Breton legend, is represented as having been so magnificent, that when Paris was built, people could think of no better name to call it than Par-Is, or the equal of Is.

The great King Grallon, whom some represent as a wicked usurper, and some as a much-trying

saint, finding it impossible to stem the torrent of wickedness that flooded his capital, retired into his own chamber, and remained there, like Lot in Sodom, the only praying man in that sinful city. His daughter, the wicked Princess Dahut, whose name at this lapse of time is spoken with a shudder, led the way in everything evil; and when the measure of their iniquities was full, St. Corentin warned King Grallon to escape while there was yet time; the raging sea was even then rushing into the doomed city. The Princess, roused by the tumult of the waters, strove to cling to her father's horse, but the saint would not allow her to be saved, and compelled the King to fly alone; and the wild despairing cry of the Princess as she sank back into the waters, may yet be heard as it comes ringing up to the surface of the deep. The priests used to go once a year out in a boat to say mass over the lost city; but this habit was swept away at the Revolution. Tradition, more enduring than stones, still points to the site of this once celebrated city, for though every vestige of the ruins has now disappeared, we have authentic accounts of

extensive remains being seen during the sixteenth century in the Bay of Douarnenez.

We were pretty well soaked by the time we turned back to the carriage, where we found our poor aunt surrounded by the unruly boys, who, having teased her out of every sou she possessed, were still clamorously demanding more; it being quite impossible to make them believe that the pocket from which so many had come could really be empty. They left us by degrees as we passed their various homes, and we plodded on under the ceaseless rain till Audierne was reached at last, where our thoughtful landlady had a bright fire ready for us, and our dinner laid upstairs, having wisely concluded that we should prefer remaining in our own rooms to coming down among the fishing community of Audierne.

Very early before starting next day, I ran out to take a look at the Capucin monastery, just outside the town. I had been told there were some splendid old oaks round it, but they must have been lately cut down, for I saw nothing but young trees. All sorts of trees grow very well in South

Finisterre ; indeed Mons. Frémenville says, "the fig, laurel, arbutus, and tamarisk, grow more vigorously and acquire a larger size here than in Provence or Languedoc." On our road to Pont Croix, we stopped at the little village of Comfort to see an old Calvary, of a triangular shape, with many curious little figures carved on it. The church beside it looked very ancient, but it was shut, and though some old men at a forge near shouted out to us that the key was in a cottage close by, as our driver assured us there was nothing to see inside, we got into the carriage, and drove on to Pont Croix, where is a very lovely fifteenth century church, with a square tower and a tall steeple ; the tracery that covers the porch is most exquisitely delicate and well worth seeing. It was in this little town that the execrable Fontenelle committed one of those atrocities for which he was afterwards broken on the wheel ; he attacked the town, murdering the inhabitants, till the street ran with blood. The principal people had barricaded themselves in the tower of the church ; among them were the Seigneur de Villeroualt and

his wife. Fontenelle, finding he could not force the tower without artillery, promised to spare the lives of its occupants if they would surrender, which they unfortunately did, and the traitorous pirate, after subjecting them to horrible indignities, hanged Villeroualt and an old priest in the Place of the village. Some time afterwards he was captured, tried for this action, and condemned to be broken alive on the wheel. The sentence was executed in 1602; the monster languished for six hours with all his bones broken before he expired, and relieved the Bretons of the greatest scourge of the age.

We quite won the heart of our landlady at Douarnenez by ordering fish and eggs for breakfast, forgetting that it was Friday; and the good woman served us with double alacrity, in consequence of our supposed similarity of religious feeling. The man selected as our guide was a most unpleasant-looking individual, his bloated face and thick voice proving him anything but a teetotaller; however, he performed his duty very well, leading us about the town; he pointed out a

quaintly carved old stone, let into the wall of a chapel, and bearing a representation of a fishing boat taking in a net with a draught of fishes as big as the men who were hauling them in, the whole superintended by a gigantic dove. Most of the churches, having been built by the donations of those connected with fisheries, bore sculptures suggestive of their donors' employments.

I think Douarnenez deserves to rank with an Indian hill village in respect of the concentrated horrors of odours that greet you at every instant, rendering scent-bottles invaluable. Our guide, smiling benignly at us, said it was nothing now; had we been there in the summer, "Ah, then it was really rather bad;" but when you remember that the inhabitants, to the number of 4000, are engaged in the sardine trade, that a large pile of fish bones, heads, and scales, lies at each door, it is no wonder if the air is redolent with unutterable combinations. Six hundred boats go out in the season, till the bay looks one mass of busy life. Large factories for pressing and packing the

fish stand between the mainland and the island of Tristan (where, by the way, the Emperor has just placed fourteen cannon); you can cross over to the island on foot when the tide is low. This little islet, looking so calm and peaceful with its tall lighthouse, and white houses dotted about, was once the stronghold of the inhuman Fontenelle: so impregnable were his fortifications, that all the efforts used to dislodge him were unavailing; his name is still mentioned with horror by the country people round. Old walls have been found on this island, which Mons. Souvestre thinks belonged to the ancient city of Is.

On the summit of the hill overlooking the Bay of Douarnenez, stands a church of the sixteenth century called Ploaré; it is the parish church, and the inhabitants of Douarnenez are obliged to go there every Sunday, for the celebration of mass. Its spire is particularly high, and serves as a landmark to ships at sea. In the porch were curious twisted pillars, and the front is covered with stones representing fishing exploits. Nora preferred resuming her seat on the coach-box, to

recover from the poisonous air she had been inhaling, and was greatly edified by the conversation of the driver, who evidently thought he had better improve the occasion, by implanting in her mind a proper respect for the Breton nation, whom he declared had *never* been beaten; people had tried it in the old times, but they might spare their trouble now. "Some men were cowards when they first saw a battle, but a Breton was different; let him catch a glimpse of the fire, and he became wild, mad—he leapt upon it, he overcame all." This man was cautious in his opinions of the present Government, but could not resist declaring the late Austrian war "a most unfortunate one, by which hundreds of men were sacrificed for the ambition of one, and nothing had been achieved;" throughout Brittany we found all unanimous in this sentiment, and hoping for peace.

He was highly amused when Nora (who had heard Father Gavazzi lecture) suggested that it was very unfair to make the Italians keep the Pope always. Seeing the French were of the

same religion, and venerated him so much, they ought to keep His Holiness at least half the year, and let the Italians have a king or emperor if they choose. This idea had never struck him before, but his dislike to the proposition was extreme, as he repeatedly exclaimed, "No thank you, indeed; have the Pope in France, certainly not!" and in the middle of other subjects he often broke off to reiterate, while laughing at the notion, that whatever eventually became of the Pope, he couldn't help, but *France* wasn't the place for him.

The conscription was a subject on which he felt keenly. Being taken from your home and forced to serve seven years, was a great hardship. "And what," he wound up by asking, "what do you gain by it?—a life of misery and toil, at the end of which you are sent home with a pair of old red trousers, and a worn-out coat on your back, and that's all. *Ma foi*, you are better off in England; and as for liberty, it is unknown now in France." At the age of twenty-one all Frenchmen must submit to be drawn; and a substitute

now costs 3,000 francs. Until three years ago there were individuals entitled "*Marchands des Hommes*," who always kept a string of men ready to act as substitutes, on receipt of a sum varying from 1,500 to 2,000 francs, but the last three years, the Paternal Government, wishing to save its children trouble, has taken these little affairs under its own fatherly administration, and the price has risen to 3,000 francs—2,500 go to the substitute, and the remaining 500 are the little profit made by the wise and watchful Government. The new recruit, on passing the Board of Inspection, is appointed either to the army or navy, according to their opinion of his constitution, &c. ; if he is attached to the former, he receives pay at the rate of 1*d.* per day, with a further sum of perhaps 2½*d.* at the end of the week; if to the latter, he gets far better pay, from thirty francs per month, and upwards. Ten francs are subtracted out of each month, and at the end of the quarter are remitted to his parents or relations; this he has nothing to do with, it is all arranged for him. If a lad chooses

to enlist of his own accord, volunteering to do so, before twenty years of age, he is called a "defender of the country," and has the privilege of selecting any corps he may wish to join; but then he is bound to serve for seventeen or twenty-one years. The country people all agree in these statements, but I do not know if it applies equally to other parts of France.

We stopped in the little village of Locronan to visit the church, which contained some very old and strange-looking stone figures, belonging to the earliest days of art. One group we made out to represent Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden; the next was totally unintelligible; another large one was intended for the descent from the cross, the figures round were principally habited in Turkish costumes, the women wearing turbans; they were brought here from the ruins of an old church near. Here also is the tomb of St. Renan, who came over from Ireland in the time of King Grallon. He lies sculptured in his full episcopal robes, on a slab of stone, like a table, an animal unknown in

natural history is crouched at his feet, supposed to represent Paganism, of which he was one of the earliest extirpators in this region. The whole is supported by six angels. On the 1st of June, St. Renan's *fête* day, the halt and maimed of the neighbourhood crawl under this table, believing they receive great benefits in consequence, and leave their various sticks and crutches, as testimonials of the efficacy of the process and the virtue of faith.

Several scenes from the saint's life are carved on the stairs of the pulpit, which lead one to infer that he must have been an object of special aversion to women, who always persecuted him, and from one of whom he received his death-wound, in this wise:—St. Renan spent his days in prayer and fasting; every morning he performed an excursion of nine miles over broken and rugged ground, across rivulets and up hill-sides. The same route was traversed every day, and had to be accomplished before the sun rose. To perform his pilgrimage with greater facility, the holy man transformed himself into an ox. In this early

morning ramble he frequently passed an old woman washing at a brook, who at last became so irritated at seeing this methodical animal crossing the stream day after day in the same manner, that in a moment of rage she hit him such a violent blow on his head with her wooden *lavoir* as to break off one of his horns. The poor saint had only strength sufficient to crawl up his mountain, and laying himself down on the summit, he breathed his last.

On the second Sunday of July, every six years, a grand pardon is held in memory of his fate; it is the most important one in the country, and the last took place in 1857. The Bishop of Quimper, bearing in his hands the consecrated wafer, followed by all the neighbouring clergy in full robes, and an immense train of nondescripts, start on the same path trodden by St. Renan. No road is allowed to be made. The reverend procession must scale walls, climb hedges, leap ditches, without the slightest deviation from the saint's track; concluding with a particularly steep hill covered with furze bushes; pity they have not all the convenience of four legs, which gave the saint such

a decided advantage, rendering the journey half as fatiguing, as the trip embraces a circuit of nine miles. They must all be rather tired at the close.

The concourse of people at this *fête* is immense. From all parts of the country they flock to Locronan; little huts of branches are erected at intervals along the line of march, where priests, for a consideration, exhibit relics. All the night preceding the grand field-day, bands of pilgrims traverse the appointed route, and stop at each hut to offer money at the shrine it contains, and bestow alms on the crowds of beggars hovering around. We hoped that the poor in the neighbourhood were greatly benefited by the donations of these pious pilgrims, as the money collected by the priests is supposed to be for their use. The man who had been recounting all this put on an indescribably comic expression, as he drily remarked, "The priests drink very good wine."

Our coachman smiled disdainfully at the marvels related of St. Renan, and vaunted the superior deeds of Notre Dame de Rumengol, who, he assured us, had gained the victory over the

Russians. For two years she had performed such wondrous miracles, that last summer it was determined that she merited a crown; accordingly, two bishops proceeded to perform the ceremony of the coronation. Great was the excitement of the country on this auspicious occasion, and for days before the event came off, every road to Rumengol was thronged with carriages and pedestrians. To use the man's own words, "there were three miles of carriages in a close pack round the place."

We were told that a strange subterranean passage existed near this, the entrance of which is on the top of a hill close to the site of St. Renan's hermitage. A huge stone covers the mouth of it, and you have to descend some hundred feet underground. The passage leads into one of the caves (Du Riz) in the Bay of Douarnenez, a distance of at least two miles. No one could give us any information respecting its history, but there was a tradition that it had been made by women. Our informant had gone down some fifty feet, but not seeing anything to be gained by a further descent, returned to the outer world;

but he knew people who had made the entire passage, and arrived successfully at the other end. We wished very much to go to these caves, but could not manage it, as the tide was full. Several women in this district wore caps made of a brilliant yellow material, and we were told this colour signified they were in mourning.*

We crossed the chain of the Montagnes Noires, which intersect this part of Brittany. The road wound over bleak barren hills, with no trees, save here and there a straggling fir. The wind swept so keen and cold over them, that although we had a magnificent view of the Bay of Douarnenez, and the Peninsula of Crozon, we were thankful to get down on the other side. Crozon seems to have been strangely neglected by tourists; it is the wildest and most uncultivated bit of Brittany. The scenery is grand

* Yellow was originally worn as mourning throughout Brittany. At present many wear black, like their English neighbours; but you frequently, in Basse Bretagne, meet with women following the funeral train of their husbands, in caps dyed with saffron. It is probably on account of there being no yellow stuffs manufactured in Brittany that they do not dress entirely in that colour.—(M. DE LA VILLEMARQUÉ)

and picturesque. It is covered from one end to the other with Druidical remains, the sea shores present endless studies in marine zoology to the naturalist, and numbers of rare and beautiful plants reward the search of the botanist, while strange and peculiar fossils delight the geologist. In addition to all these attractions there are some lovely caves at Morgatt, into which you enter by a boat, and find a natural altar surrounded by water, a high vaulted roof, stained with many metallic colours, and draped with garlands of fern, forming a perfect temple for the sea nymphs.

As soon as we reached Chateaulin we went to see the remains of the old fortress, which stands on the summit of a rising ground close to the town. This castle was built as early as the year 1000; the centre of it is now turned into a field, and men were busy ploughing on the very spot which at one time echoed to the hurrying footsteps of eager warriors arming for assault. A part of one tower still remains, but where once the castle standard floated proudly in the breeze,

long wreaths of ivy-sprays now sway mournfully to the wind. Every road and path was strewn with chips of slate, of which there are large quarries in the neighbourhood. It is here that the canal from Nantes joins the river which flows into the Bay of Brest. The inhabitants pride themselves on the beauty of the scenery around, but it is not to be compared to many other parts of Brittany.

The hostess of the "*grande maison*" alarmed us by announcing her house was full; but she added, "There is one room on the third floor, if you will not object to mounting so high." Necessity has no law, so up we went, getting into regions of cobwebs and darkness, the floor strewn with hay, &c.; but were considerably relieved, on the door being opened, to see a large comfortable room, with three good beds in it, of which we thankfully took possession. The *bonne* was decidedly handsome, notwithstanding her outrageous cap and collar. Her beauty shone through everything. I asked her to sit to me, and when her evening's work was over, she did so, in a statu-

esque manner, and seemed well pleased with the case of English needles she received as a remembrance. We noticed several of the women in the



BONNE AT CHATEAULIN.

neighbourhood, all with the same Jewish cast of countenance.

About ten leagues from Chateaulin stands the

old city of Carhaix, celebrated as the residence of the wicked Princess Atrès, second daughter of King Grallon; legends say there used to be a paved road from thence to Is. In more modern times, 1743, Carhaix gave birth to the great "La Tour D'Auvergne," a hero only second to Duguesclin, in Breton hearts. Among the coloured ballad literature which usually adorns the walls of small hotels, you find the adventures of D'Auvergne a very favourite theme. I was amused to find one in which some English soldiers, having taken him prisoner, are insisting, "with a brutality which it is very difficult to conceive," that he should surrender his sword; so outraged were his feelings that he snapped the weapon across his knee. We always made a point of studying these illustrations, and found, as a general rule, they ended with a picture of the heroine (who always, in despair, enters a convent just the day before her hero returns triumphant), coming out, in her nun's dress, to bless him publicly before they part for ever.

Next morning we were up before five, as our

Driver recommended us to start by six. We had yet an hour's drive, nearly, to reach the steamer that was to take us to Brest. It was a bitter cold morning, mist hung in clouds over the river along whose banks we drove, for it was low water; and though the steamer drew but three feet, even when laden with 150 passengers, we had to wait more than an hour before the bell rang for starting. There had been a hard frost during the night; everything looked white, and as the sun shone out, the deck and seats became so wet we were driven to take refuge in the cabin.

We noticed a man on board dressed in sacking, his jacket very much stained, his boots plentifully smeared with grease, and a large brass horn, nearly as big as himself, round his neck. He had two companions, attired in most extreme sporting costume, and some dogs. They talked loudly and exclusively of sporting, and we thought them not gentlemanly enough for gamekeepers, and were surprised to hear afterwards the one in canvas was a marquis, and his companions both men of high rank. I do not think English gentlemen could

make such objects of themselves as these French sportsmen do.

On a promontory at the mouth of the river stands the ruins of the old abbey of Landévennec, which was founded at the close of the fifth century by St. Guenolé, who passed through the sea from Wales, with his disciples, just as the Israelites did of old. They retired to the woods, and every day were regaled by celestial melodies; but in the midst of life of penitence and austerity a great inconvenience arose—no one died; and they saw no end to their sufferings. At length the saint was persuaded by King Grallon to move to Landévennec, where death was allowed to enter; but only the oldest brethren were taken, according to their age and rank. This led to great laxity of monastic discipline among the younger members, which ended in restoring things to a natural state, and death took old or young indiscriminately from the abbey. The saint and King Grallon are both interred on opposite sides of the church; their tombs, though devoid of ornament, were destroyed during the Revolution. A small vault was recently

discovered, containing two sculptured figures in episcopal robes; they bear no date or inscription, but are supposed to have been executed in the fifteenth century.

As we entered the harbour of Brest, a gentleman on board pointed out some huge war steamers, saying they were Russians lately arrived; there was also a dainty, trim Russian ship of the line. The officers of all these vessels were on most amiable terms with their French neighbours, exchanging compliments in the shape of claret and champagne suppers.

There is an immense bridge in course of construction, for the purpose of connecting the two sides of the harbour together. The fortress of Brest has undergone many sieges, but has never yet surrendered, and it is deemed impregnable. In 1824 the director of fortifications ordered the whole underground part of the castle to be cleared out, and in the oubliettes were found the bones and hair of two skeletons. Before Richelieu commenced the French royal navy, in 1631, Brest was a place of small

importance, but that clever and adroit minister saw at a glance the advantages afforded by nature to the place, and determined to make it the head quarters for the navy. Colbert carried out all Richelieu's projects, establishing at once the prosperity and importance of Brest, which is now a large and wealthy town.

Being essentially new, and moreover containing nothing genuinely Breton, we made all speed to leave it, and at once hired a carriage to take us to Conquet. Our only regret at quitting Brest in this hurried manner was, that we were unable to pay a visit to the "Garde Joyeuse," so well known in the annals of the Round Table, and surrounded by undying memories of Tristram, and the fair-haired Yseult, still treasured up in many a Breton legend; here we should have lingered with befitting awe, peopling it with visions of departed days, when gallant knights held gay tourneys in the now deserted castle yard, and bright eyes of witching damsels, looking down from storied balconies, bestowed a loving guerdon on their captive knights beneath.

We should have utterly disbelieved M. de Fréminville's insinuations, that the ruins now visible only date from the twelfth century, setting them aside as unworthy of attention, and persisting in our faith of its sixth-century origin. However, there were many places of interest to be explored in the direction of Conquet, and thither we departed, reaching it too late to do anything beyond strolling through the town. Some of the old houses still remain, which escaped from the general devastation of the place in 1597, by the English. Divided from Conquet by an arm of the sea, lies the narrow strip of land called Kermovan, containing many Druidic monuments. Our inn was somewhat primitive in appearance; our rooms were adjoining the house, and owned a separate staircase; the hay had just been stored for the winter, and our ascent was accomplished through a quantity of it, while the passages were composed of beaten-down mud; our meals were served in our own rooms, and the attendant saved herself trouble, by shaking the table-cloth on the floor, and

left all the spoons, tumblers, &c. on the chest of drawers.

Such a night as it was—the wind gaining almost as free access as if the windows had been open! In our room there were three, besides a door and a fire-place; and down and through each rushed a current of air which it was hopeless to evade or stop out in any way; but we had determined to see St. Matthieu, so we kept up a good fire, and did not mind a few minor discomforts. Accordingly, when the sun rose bright and cheerful, next morning, we bravely prepared to face wind and cold (for the last few days winter seemed suddenly to have appeared), and, rolling ourselves up in our plaids, departed for the most westerly point in France. Our landlady sent her little girl with us, to show us the road; but as the lighthouse on the point came in sight, we dismissed our little guide, and found our way alone, stopping at the village of Lochrist to look for the tomb of Michel de Nobletz, who, early in the seventeenth century, Christianised the country round, and also the inhabitants of the adjacent

islands. Till his arrival, they had all been pagans. There was no tomb to be seen ; and a country-woman told us it had been moved to Conquet, where he was born. However, we saw a granite pillar to the memory of Goudenec, who first translated the Bible into Breton.

On we went, through roads where blocks of stone would have annihilated any vehicle that attempted to pass, and deep seas of mud, which compelled Nora and I to mount, and walk on the tops of the banks—an easy matter when the bank was composed of ground, but when it was a low wall of stones, loosely built up without mortar, which is very common in these parts, it becomes a work of difficulty.

The golden whin was all in blossom, and but for that ornament, the country looked bare enough—no houses, save miserable, windowless hovels here and there, with small fields, stocked with giant cabbages. At last, after three miles of very rough walking, we reached the ruined abbey of St. Matthieu, domineered over by the upstart looking whitewashed lighthouse, whose

very new and jaunty appearance made the grey old ruins look doubly solemn and hoary. We had an order to visit the lighthouse, but our enthusiasm would not carry us up all those steps, so we wandered about the deserted ruins, now used as a store place for wood and jars—like those mentioned in “Ali Baba”—containing the supply of fresh water for the men on guard.

There has been an abbey here since 555. Of course the present ruin is more modern; the monks used to keep a light constantly burning for the guidance of ships passing through the perilous channel of Four, between the mainland and Ouessant, but the pirates, unmoved by these charitable offices, often made use of this friendly signal to land in safety and ravage the abbey. The ruins stand on the summit of a high cliff, the base of which is jagged and fretted by the ceaseless waves of the Atlantic. The rocks of the headland are very bold and fine, and the waves are superb. Far away to the left is visible the Pointe du Raz, and the tall lighthouse on Sein, looking like a speck on the ocean; to the right

are the long low-lying islands of Molène, Beniguet, and Ouessant,* with its large lighthouse, which is much needed, for the sea seems full of sunken rocks. Numbers of boats are lost here, the currents being fearfully strong; and the week before our arrival a cutter, with her crew and passengers, among them a mother and seven children, all sank under the treacherous waves.

The old Breton proverb, "He that sees Ouessant sees his blood," seems really justified. As usual, soldiers everywhere; I do not know whether they keep watch at the lighthouse, but two were sauntering about as if at home. We sat on the rocks, which were covered with samphire, watching the surf, which the late storms had raised to a great height, till threatening black clouds in the horizon warned us home.

As we were entering Conquet we were attracted by the sight of a waterspout, slowly sweeping along "the line where sea and sky unite," and the boiling, foaming water leaping to join it. I

* Ouessant, or Ushant, is said to be the "Ultima Thule" of the ancients.

pointed it out to a peasant, and asked him what it was. "Probably a fire," he replied, very sleepily. "But it can't be fire, it is on the sea; I think it is a waterspout," I rejoined. "True; no doubt water is falling," said he, and I turned away, provoked at his indifference. Nothing can be conceived more solemn and melancholy than the faces of these peasants; they lead very miserable lives, completely stupifying themselves with brandy, and generally look idiotic in consequence. We entered the church at Conquet, where a number of women were chanting some service in a high-pitched nasal key. Here stood the missionary's tomb; he is represented in his priestly robes, kneeling on a sarcophagus of black marble. The church was principally built by a lady in the neighbourhood, who gave twenty-two thousand francs towards it, and a great part of the stones were brought from the old church at Lochrist. "She came to Conquet as poor as I am," said our informant, "but she and her husband made money working at the mills, which they now own, and have a great fortune."

Before this church was erected, the inhabitants of Conquet had to walk to Lochrist for service, which seemed hardly fair, as Conquet is far the largest village, and was a place of importance before Brest was heard of. All burials still take place at Lochrist, as there is no cemetery at Conquet. About two leagues to the north are the quarries of Plouarzel, whence comes the rose-coloured granite, which forms the pedestal of the Luxor obelisk, at Paris, and of which also the arsenal at Brest is built.

We made an agreement that evening with the master of the house to take us next day to Lesneven, stopping at St. Renan, where we wished to make a *détour* to Lanriouaré, and were to get a fresh horse to do so ; then, returning to St. Renan, resume our first steed, and continue to Lesneven ; for this journey we were to pay fifteen francs. We willingly agreed to this price, but could not understand why the man insisted on our starting so early, as the distance was but nine leagues, which we generally accomplished in three or four hours at the longest ; however, we

obeyed his injunctions, and were ready to start at seven.

Alas! the carriage was an open one; and as it commenced raining, we three had to pack into the back seat, which was by no means roomy; our baggage piled in front had a rug thrown over it; and the driver, our host, himself wore his huge blanket cloak, an article no Breton stirs without in winter, and which is impervious to any amount of rain. No wonder he recommended us to commence our travels at dawn; his wretched horse could only drag us along at a walking pace, while the rain grew worse and worse. In vain we drew the small leather curtains in front of the hood; little rivulets entered in all directions, and tiny cascades leapt over our hats and down our dresses. It was a comfort to reach St. Renan, where the good woman of the hotel ushered us into the kitchen, and placed seats round the wide fire-place for us. While waiting there, we asked the hostess about the menhir of Kerloaz near this—a superb shaft of granite, forty feet high. It is said the married women of the parish believe if they go to

its foot, they secure to themselves the upper hand in the management of their households. The old woman pretended to be quite astonished at such a foolish story, and declared, though she had been married forty years she had never gone to the stone. These people are so fearful of ridicule, that they will never acknowledge any belief in a legend, unless quite sure of the subject being treated with due reverence by the hearer, and generally deny all knowledge of such tales. Having ordered hot coffee and chocolate to be ready against our return (which, however poor-looking the inn may be, is always sure to be excellent, and neatly served up), and a fresh horse being harnessed, we departed on our expedition to the sainted region of Lanriouaré. Lady Leslie determined to content herself with our description, and stayed at the hotel, trying to get the wet out of our plaids. The driver entered into conversation by making excuses for his first horse, as the present one carried us well enough. He said it had not yet recovered from the fatigue of going to Landerneau, where he had been attending a

wedding; quite a small affair, only eighty people being present. The bride was rather a nice girl of twenty. Weddings, round about here, he said, were generally celebrated with great *éclat*, from one thousand to fifteen hundred individuals frequently sitting down to dinner, which on such occasions was laid out in a field. He disapproved of early marriages, as a girl under twenty could have no experience in managing a farm properly. The pitiless rain came down in torrents as we neared our destination, and we entered the churchyard under a pouring shower. A small enclosure is separated from the rest, and paved with flat irregular stones, and a border of black marble. Under this pavement (so runs the tradition) repose the bodies of seven thousand seven hundred and seventy-seven saints. It is startling in these degenerate days to hear of such wholesale sanctity, and we found it somewhat difficult of credence. This has been explained by subtracting one of the figures, and supposing the remainder to represent the number inhabiting the village who were converted to Christianity, and killed in consequence

by their pagan neighbours; of course, dying for their faith immediately entitled them to saintship.

Here, too, lie some large and small round stones. The blind St. Hervé, of blessed memory, feeling the pangs of hunger while passing a baker's shop one day, asked for some bread as an alms. The



LANRIOUARÉ.

baker denied having any. "What then is in your oven?" demanded St. Hervé. "Only some stones," replied the baker. "Stones they are,"

thundered the exasperated saint, and sure enough the baker, aghast, opened his oven, and found all his fine fresh loaves turned to stone, a punishment for his falsehood and want of charity. He could not have been an accomplished baker, judging from the shape of his loaves, which are most irregular; but bread might have been made differently in former ages. Skulls and bones are strewn around in a most disagreeable manner, and numbers of strange old saints, in carved wood, dethroned by new comers from their pedestals, lie about in helpless attitudes. This curious old place is well worth seeing, but the traveller has no chance of finding it if he attempts to pronounce its name as it is written; the best plan would be to ask the driver the name of "that very holy cemetery." If, in reply, you hear something that ends in "warrie," tell the man to go there at once. We returned to St. Renan considerably edified, and found everything ready for us, besides a bag of smoking chestnuts to beguile the tedium of our onward journey. Our miserable horse, revived a little by his rest and feed, actually

attempted to trot, but soon relapsed into his usual walk. We passed through the little village of Gouesnou, which was in a state of excited preparation, for the morrow was to be the great day of the year, namely, the annual horse fair, said to be the largest held in Brittany; thirty thousand horses sometimes are collected together here.

The church, built in 1572, is a handsome edifice, and contained the tomb of St. Gouesnou, but it was destroyed by the revolutionists. His skeleton was found, and the bones were all dispersed, except the scull, which was placed as an anatomical study in the Marine Hospital at Brest, whence it disappeared some years ago, and has never been heard of since. Still the rain poured down, and the horse walked leisurely on; we began to think fifteen francs very dear for such a long day of discomfort. The road was enlivened by numbers of people on their way to Gouesnou, in readiness for the fair; they discarded the wide hat of Basse Bretagne, and wore small Scotch bonnets, and no Highlander ever possessed keener grey eyes than looked out from under those bonnets. Parties of

men, eight or a dozen at a time, passed us with heavy whips, but no animals to drive; these were all rich graziers, who would invest in several young horses, and taking them home, perhaps to the next province, would rear and fatten them, selling them generally at a high profit. Some had orders to buy for Government, which does not like to appear publicly on these occasions.

Up and down some very bad hills we crawled, till at last Lesneven was announced in sight, and at five we entered the town, wet and cold; the hotel was quite full, and the attendance purely imaginary.

After dinner a violin commenced in the room above us, and for three hours the indefatigable player performed the "Lancers" over and over again; he was holding a dancing-school for young men. A grand ball was to come off next night, and the disciples of Terpsichore were anxious to acquit themselves with due honour on the occasion. They certainly were persevering, and though their movements were not characterised by lightness (being anything but fairy footfalls), they kept wonderful

time; the house quite shook as they made a rush at the grand chain of the last figure. If perseverance meets with its reward, they certainly deserved to be crowned with success, for no resting time was allowed; one set finished, it was recommenced without a moment's pause. About nine the *bonne* came up to ask if the noise disturbed us, offering to send them away if it did. By this time most of them, from constant repetition, had learned the tune, and each sang it at the top of his voice for his own special gratification; while the odours of tobacco and spirits perfumed the air. We suggested that in another hour a little quiet would be very agreeable, but we would endeavour to bear it till then. I suppose, however, she went up and dismissed them at once, as the creaking of the stairs and stamping of boots announced their departure almost immediately afterwards.

Our driver would not let us pay him on alighting, saying he should spend the night at Lesneven, and there was no hurry. In the course of the evening he appeared, and I presented him with a napoleon, and requested the change. "Well,

but let us see, how much must I return you?" "Five francs," said I, "as you agreed to bring us for fifteen." "Ah, yes, but we must arrange this little affair. You see I had my *déjeuner* at St. Renan; true it was but little, and only cost a franc. Then I must dine here, you perceive; that will be two francs more; and then the stabling for my horse, I will only put you down two francs for that—I do it cheaply, you observe—that will make up the twenty; and if you consider the bad day and the trouble I have had, you will acknowledge I have wronged myself in charging so little." Whereupon he bowed in a deprecating manner, and left the room. We were too much astonished at his coolness to remonstrate even; never before had we been expected to pay for the horse's stabling; and as for the driver's meals, it was a clear imposition. In the first place, the landlady at St. Renan had told us it was but four sous for his bowl of soup, and generally hotel-keepers charge these men nothing for their food; it is a sort of equivalent for bringing travellers to their hotel; besides, we had made a clear arrangement

with him at Conquet for fifteen francs. I insert our experience here as a warning to future tourists; it is impossible to be too careful with these people, they are all anxious to make money by you, and will do it one way or the other.

On the morrow the rain still fell, regardless of the fair, and we had to hire a carriage to take us to the Follgoet, not a mile off, for which we had to pay five francs. This church is a lovely Gothic building, erected at the commencement of the fifteenth century by Jean IV. Duke of Bretagne. The porch, with its delicate tracery and fanciful imagery, has all fallen down, and the remains lie heaped on either side of the entrance door, appealing for pity from passers-by. Will no one restore them? The screen is wondrously carved with complex arches and crocketed pinnacles all in stone; it has a peculiarly light and lacy effect. There is also an exquisite shrine in carved stone, and all the details of the church are carefully worked out. But in one corner hangs a frame containing six most atrocious and villanously painted pictures, de-

scriptive of the rise and progress of the church, which had its origin from a poor idiot, named Salam, who lived in 1350. Being almost dumb, he could only exclaim "Ave Maria," as he begged his daily bread, thereby leading the country people to believe him devoted to the service of the Virgin. His only lodging was the branch of a tree in the forest of Guicquelleau, where he amused himself by swinging for hours together, continually crying, "Ave Maria." His only subsistence was the bread given him in charity, which he steeped in the waters of the fountain (near the present church), in which also he used frequently to stand up to his neck, trying to assuage the fire that burnt in his veins. At his death, the curé buried him in the parish cemetery. And now a great wonder arose. For, some months after his death, a beautiful white lily sprang out of his grave, on every leaf of which was inscribed, in golden letters, "Ave Maria." This marvel reached the ears of the Duke, who ordered a small chapel to be erected immediately, close to the tree and fountain which

had been the fool's daily resort, under the title of Notre Dame du Follgoet, or "Fool of the Wood." But when this same Jean IV. was going to do battle for his duchy with Charles of Blois, he made a vow that, if conqueror, the "Fool's chapel" should give place to a costly edifice, which in due course of time was performed. Years elapsed, and Anne of Brittany came to add new beauties to the favoured spot; a priory was built adjoining, in which the clergy lived, and where they received the illustrious pilgrims to the shrine.*

Visiting the Follgoet employed the whole of the morning, which was a comfort, as the dirty, noisy hotel was anything but agreeable; and we impatiently awaited the arrival of the little dili-

* At the "Festin des Rois," in this parish, when the cake is cut a portion is put aside for the absent ones. If it keeps well, no danger menaces those for whom it was intended; if, on the contrary, it cannot be kept, news of illness or death will shortly arrive.

When an infant is taken to church for baptism, the mother ties a piece of black bread round its throat, as a symbol of its humble position in the world, in order that bad spirits, seeing it has not a happy lot, may leave it unmolested.—(M. SOUVES-
TRE's *Derniers Bretons*.)

gence from Brest, in which we had secured places to take us on to St. Pol de Leon.

A communicative countrywoman told us, after we had started, how thankful she was to see us, for we had displaced a tipsy man and a woman who smoked. They had now ascended the roof, but had made her feel extremely unwell.

At Lochrist, in Haut Leon (Loc means Saint, and many Breton villages have that syllable affixed to their names), we stopped to leave some packages. There is a church of the twelfth century, and some peculiar tombs have been discovered, formed in the shape of a trough, and a place hollowed out for the head of the corpse to repose in. The country now became wild and rocky; at Plouescat we lost our companion, who had been to Brest to console a widowed sister. She enlarged upon the folly of dressing beyond one's station, saying she always told young people they would be more respected if they kept where Providence had seen fit to place them, than in trying to vie with their superiors. Between Plouescat and St. Pol we passed many

Druidical fragments—broken menhirs and mutilated dolmens ; but we were quite tired of seeing so many, and paid no attention to them. Huge



FISHERMEN FROM PLOUESCAT.

masses of granite broke the even surface of the fields, and to the left, broken lands and rocky points gave peeps of chafing sea ; at times we passed close to it, and then straggling promontories of land and tall hedges shut out the view. The night came stealing on, and still we journeyed

along. There were but few cottages near, and the country seemed one dreary waste. Here and there a tall church-spire rose proudly towards the heavens, clear and sharp, out against the cold grey of the sky. Then the red fire of a distant lighthouse, like some giant ogre's eye, glared fitfully on the scene and vanished out of sight, to return again as if in quest of prey, till we quitted the dangerous vicinity. Occasionally we mounted a long steep hill and then galloped thundering down the other side, all the harness flying loose, and the old diligence groaning and leaping over stones and ruts, causing my poor aunt to hold on tight at each side in momentary expectation of an upset. It was pitch dark when we reached St. Pol de Leon, and were turned out at the house of our driver, whose wife, a keen business hand, made us pay the same fare as if we had come all the way from Brest, instead of exactly half that distance. Here we met a little Frenchman, whom we recognised having seen at the *table d'hôte* at Quimper; he undertook to guide us through the streets to the hotel. It was well

he knew his way, for we could not see a foot before us.

This gentleman, like ourselves, was most anxious to proceed to Morlaix next day, and there was but one carriage in the place, which we meant to take. He offered to go and secure it, and make arrangements, if we would allow him, to join us in it, to which we agreed, and settled to start at ten next morning. Of course we were up in good time, as there was much to be seen, and firstly, the church called Kreisker, Breton for "middle of the town," with its marvellous spire, the highest in France, said by some to have been built by an Englishman, by others ascribed to his Satanic Majesty, who, seeing no reason why Christians only should have beautiful churches, set to work to eclipse them all, on his own special account, and was of course summarily ejected by holy water, and other similar processes, as soon as the *chef d'œuvre* was completed. Tall narrow windows decorate the tower, from which springs the wondrous spire, pierced through with cunningly worked ornamentations, rendering it

quite transparent, and of aërial lightness. Round its base stand four sharply pointed pinnacles, and the entire height is three hundred and thirty feet. But the grand effect is better gained when viewed from a distance; then all other spires in the town fade before the matchless beauty of the Kreisker. The cathedral looks heavy and dumpy, and is a bad imitation of its superb neighbour; all the churches in the adjacent parishes have endeavoured to copy from this magnificent model. The cathedral of St. Pol was originally founded in the fifth century, by Conan Meriadec; but, as usual in those days, it was built in wood, which soon passed away, and its successor in stone also fell a victim to the united spoliations of war and time; till, about the fourteenth century, the present edifice was raised. Here we saw quantities of those strange little Gothic boxes, each containing a scull, with the defunct owner's name painted upon it, presenting a weird and ghostly effect when a row of them grin horribly through a heart-shaped opening in the front of the box from the summit of a pillar near. In this church

is one of those enormous stone basins used for the baptism, by immersion, of the early Christian converts, proving that a church did exist far anterior to the present erection ; near it lies an immense stone coffin, said to have been Conan Meriadec's tomb, but owing to the many changes which have passed over the place there is great room for doubt on the subject. The name of this king occurs so often in the history of Ancient Brittany, that a short notice of him may be interesting.

Maximilian, son-in-law of Octavius of England, and Conan Meriadec his nephew, came over to Armorica in 383, and tried to displace the Romans. Fifteen thousand soldiers were killed, and the country was almost depopulated. Maximilian sent for one hundred thousand men, thirty thousand chevaliers, eleven thousand young ladies, and six thousand peasant girls, headed by Saint Ursula ; but the greater number of the women perished on the way, by tempests, pirates, and other calamities. Saint Ursula seemed rather fond of these kind of excursions, as we read of

her making several, always attended by the same large train of damsels. I little thought, when viewing her relics at Cologne, that I should ever learn the object of her journey. It is as well to mention, that Geoffrey de Monmouth, who details this, is called by William of Newbridge, Geoffrey the Liar. Nemino, an equally veracious historian, asserts that the soldiers were obliged to marry the women of the country, but each husband took the precaution of cutting out his wife's tongue, lest the children should learn to speak the language of their mothers. It is certain that Conan succeeded in gaining the confidence of the people, and was made king, repulsed the Romans, called his territory New Bretagne, established his capital at Nantes, and offered an asylum to his own countrymen, many of whom, hard pressed by the Scots and Saxons, gladly accepted his offer, and settled in Brittany. Druidism was almost abolished, and Christianity established, in this reign. Conan Meriadec died in 421.

On the ceiling of one of the small chapels attached to the cathedral and founded by the

Dresnay family, is a strange painting, representing the Trinity under the form of three human faces joined in a circle together ; on a scroll round it is written in Gothic characters, *Ma Douez*, "My God." M. de Freminville says, it is a symbol of a



SYMBOL OF THE TRINITY.

religion much older than Christianity. The pavement is entirely composed of flat tombstones, inscribed with names of families long passed away and forgotten. This Bishopric of Leon prides itself above its neighbours on the purity and elegance of the Breton language spoken within its limits. On the coast near Leon is the little town of Roscoff, where the ill-fated Mary of Scots landed when driven there by a storm during her voyage

from France to Scotland. She founded a small chapel there in remembrance of the event.

We hoped to have reached Morlaix in time to catch the midday diligence for St. Briec, as the weather was far too cold to make a prolonged ramble pleasant. We therefore hurried back to the hotel, hoping to find the carriage ready to start; but there sat the little Frenchman, calmly eating his breakfast and leisurely sipping his *café noire*, as if no such word as haste was known in his vocabulary, and seeing us waiting, ready to depart, had not the slightest effect in expediting his movements. I took a sketch of the *bonne*, to wile away the time; she was a bright-looking girl, and highly delighted at the honour. She carried off her portrait for her mistress to inspect, and brought us down her best caps to examine, as the construction was most intricate.

All things must come to an end, as did our companion's breakfast, and we mounted the carriage (which would easily have carried nine), leaving him possession of the front seat, where he gracefully disposed himself, and erecting his small legs,

encased in shepherd's plaid, proceeded to construct and smoke an endless number of cigarettes. He informed us that his father had vineyards in Touraine, and produced a neat black box, fitted up with several bottles containing samples of cognac, mostly pure white, the fruits of the paternal distillery. He handed one small bottle to the driver, the contents of which speedily disappeared, to my aunt's horror ; she felt certain the man would drive us into the next ditch ; and when, a few miles further on, the black box was again brought out, with a view of accelerating our coachman's progress, she implored so earnestly that no more spirits might be administered, that the little Frenchman was obliged to yield to her entreaties.

He gave us a long account of a horse whereof he was the fortunate possessor, and the fellow to which was not in existence. This rare animal could trot at the rate of twenty-four miles an hour, not for a continuance, but a few miles at a time. He thought of taking it over to England, where he intended to make a considerable sum by it, being confident no English horse had a chance against it. I don't

wish to be uncharitable, but, may he go to England and get beaten, was my earnest desire; for, as we anticipated, we were too late in arriving at Morlaix for the midday diligence, and the next started at the uncomfortable hour of one in the morning. However, Morlaix* is a bright, pleasant-looking town, and a day was not too long a time to spend in strolling over it; but we again regretted, as we had often done before, that we had not purchased a small carriage and horse on first commencing our tour, as it is much the best and easiest way of travelling in Brittany, and renders you independent at once of diligences and voituriers, and would, I feel assured, in the end, prove much the cheapest mode of travelling, to say nothing of the extra comfort gained. A carriage and horse suitable for such an expedition could be easily procured at Dinan, or any frontier town; and French servants, if you speak kindly to them, are most cheerful and hard-working creatures.

Several old buildings have been swept away by handsome new ones, but some wonderfully

* There is a French Protestant church at Morlaix.

ancient streets still remain, and they were particularly gay, for a regiment had just marched in, and the soldiers were looking for their billets, and bargaining for cabbages and carrots with the market women. In the church are two very striking pictures, one of St. Vincent de Paul (who always took charge of deserted children) carrying home two babies he has picked out of the snowy streets. One pretty little pet, wrapped in a blanket, is composedly sucking its thumb; the other looks very uncomfortable, slightly bound up in a piece of canvas, with straws sticking to it; the head of the saint is wonderfully life-like. The other picture, a scene in purgatory, is well calculated to impress that error more deeply on the minds of those who believe it. A pitying angel is bending over the eternal fires of purgatory, assisting a soul to rise which has been rescued by the prayers of its friends. The other souls, gazing upwards with longing and envious eyes on their fortunate companion, are plunged up to their necks in the seething, boiling flames. The woman's profile is singularly delicate and beautiful. There is a frightful copy of this picture in another church.

I was exceedingly sorry to leave Morlaix without paying a visit to that wild country that surrounds the lead mines of Huelgoat, about six leagues off; the cascade there is very fine, and the remarkable assemblage of rocks, piled in wondrous confusion, would give an artist many days' occupation; besides, there is a lovely Gothic church buried in these wilds, and then, the Bretons round retain all their old customs and prejudices untouched by civilization.

The Leonnais are a singularly morose and taciturn race, with strong religious instincts, but always for the gloomy and dreadful; the sermons of their priests are a continual repetition of the horrors of death and judgment. Of course legends are plentiful amongst them, and some of their superstitions are curious, such as the one regarding All Saints' Day. Towards midnight, after a supper partaken by the whole family together, they quit the room, leaving the table spread, and believe that at this hour the dead arise from their graves, and, returning to their homes, take their annual repast. Then, on St. John's Day, as night draws on, first one fire appears, then another, till thousands break out all

over the landscape, and the earth seems a reflection of the sky with its myriads of stars; songs of rejoicing and strange music are heard around; girls in *fête* costume dance round these fires, knowing that if nine are visited ere midnight arrives, they are certain of a husband before a year passes away. Long chains of people unite in dancing these "*rondes*," forming a strange scene of shadows flitting about in the glancing firelight; empty chairs are placed near each blazing pile for the dead who come to listen to the songs and watch the dances of their friends and relations.

One day we passed a man dressed in white, with floating hair, a large hat, a huge stick, and a knapsack on his back. M. Souvestre thus describes him:—"He walks along in silence, never answering when addressed; excisemen tell you he is a smuggler of salt and tobacco, but ask a countryman who it is, he will tell you the white man is a kind of demon, called a "conductor of souls;" is any one in the last death agony, these spectral figures throng like wolves round the house, and unless the dying man's guardian angel is close at

hand, the white demon seizes the fleeting soul, packs it in his knapsack, and carries it to the swamps round St. Michel, where it remains till rescued by the prayers of its relatives.

We had hoped to have spent some days in this neighbourhood, but the rapid approach of winter, and the storms of wind and rain that followed us, warned us to hasten home, as we had a stormy sea to cross.

Lanmeur, three leagues from Morlaix, is rich in the possession of two very ancient churches; one, belonging to the priory, dates from the eleventh century; the other, called St. Melars, has a crypt, which some assert to have been the actual temple used by Pagans in the fourth century for the worship of a sacred spring which still flows through it.

Lannion, the next town we passed, seems principally interesting from its varied street architecture, built in every variety of form and strange device. The houses almost touch each other at the upper stories, while affording sufficient room for traffic in the streets beneath. All

the necessaries of life are procurable at a very low rate, and I have heard of two or three English families advantageously settled here. Lannion suffered fearfully from cholera, which made great devastations, both in the town and surrounding villages, being altogether unopposed by the superstitious Bretons, who, believing it to be a judgment from on high, considered it impious to use any means to arrest its progress.*

* It was at Lannion (according to a popular Armorican legend given by M. de la Villemarqué) that King Arthur was giving a *fête*, whereat were five kings and their five queens. Towards the close of the feast, Merlin entered, and presented King Arthur with three golden apples, a dower for the three loveliest ladies. Great debates ensued between the five queens, in which their husbands took part. Words ran high, and swords were drawn, when a chevalier appeared, mounted on a black horse, so swift that it went twenty leagues an hour. Asking the cause of dispute, he was made arbiter of the quarrel, and guardian of the apples. Turning them round, and considering them, he praised their golden colour, resembling the fair tresses of the five queens. Inhaling the perfume of the fruit, he pronounced it only less sweet than the balmy breath of the ladies. The husbands, enchanted, looked tenderly at their wives, who lowered their eyes, as well-bred people always do in similar circumstances; but when they again raised them the chevalier was gone with the prize, and his horse carried him beyond pursuit.

A few miles out of Lannion, may be seen the château of Kerduel, where it is supposed Arthur and his brilliant train of knights resided; and near this spot, at a short distance from the land, lies the bleak and desolate little island of Avalon (in which was forged the magic sword "Calibourne," given by the fairies to King Arthur), far different to the ever blooming orchards and scenes of calm delight depicted in the glowing language of the "Morte D'Artur." Here, the Bretons still believe, King Arthur's mortal frame reposes, locked in the potent spell of deep enchantment's power. There is a most matter-of-fact solution of his disappearance, which I never heard before, namely, that round this island lie treacherous quicksands, and Arthur may, while living at Kerduel, have been lured on to them in the excitement of the chase, and thus he vanished from mortal ken, leaving no sign whereby to trace his fate. One of Arthur's first exploits in Brittany was killing a giant, who had carried off the Princess Helen to the top of Mont St. Michel, where he defended his prize against all

the crowds of Bretons who followed to save the Princess, till Arthur arrived, and slew the giant at once. These and other traditions are related with superb scorn by the Abbé Vertot, writing in 1720, who wonders at any one believing them.

Treguier, through which we passed, has a large and handsome church, with a goodly sized spire, but the few minutes sufficing for the exchange of mailbags did not allow us time to examine it. On a desert height near the town stands a chapel raised in honour of our Lady of Hatred, to which country people wishing to avenge themselves of real or imaginary wrongs, resort at nightfall, and implore speedy death to their enemies.*

We stopped at Paimpol for breakfast, a pretty little town on the borders of the sea. Our walk

* In searching for the body of a drowned person, the whole family assembles, dressed in mourning. A loaf of black bread is brought, in which a lighted taper is fixed, and the whole launched on the waves. The finger of Providence directs the bread to the spot where the corpse lies; and the family thus warned can inter it in consecrated ground.—(PAYS DE TREGUIER, M. SOUVESTRE'S *Derniers Bretons*.)

through it caused a great sensation—travellers evidently were rarities. But the good people of Paimpol certainly understand the art of living well, to judge by the articles for sale in their tiny shops. Truffles, canisters of preserved soups and meats, rare wines, are most unusual things to be found in a small fishing village. Formerly this was a great resort of pirates, and in those days there were fifty inns and three watchmakers in the place, and every sailor bought with his first winnings a watch and chain.

In a pretty bay, close to Paimpol, stand the large ruins of Beauport Abbey, nearly hidden by trees. It was founded by Alain, Count de Goello, in 1202, and his brother Conan gave the monks the privilege of holding a fair during three days of Pentecost. The old bishops, abbots, and barons of Brittany had the right, in common with the Duke, of coining black-money of one denier pieces—the king alone could issue any other coinage.

As usual, up and down hill our journey lay, till an unusually long ascent ended in the town

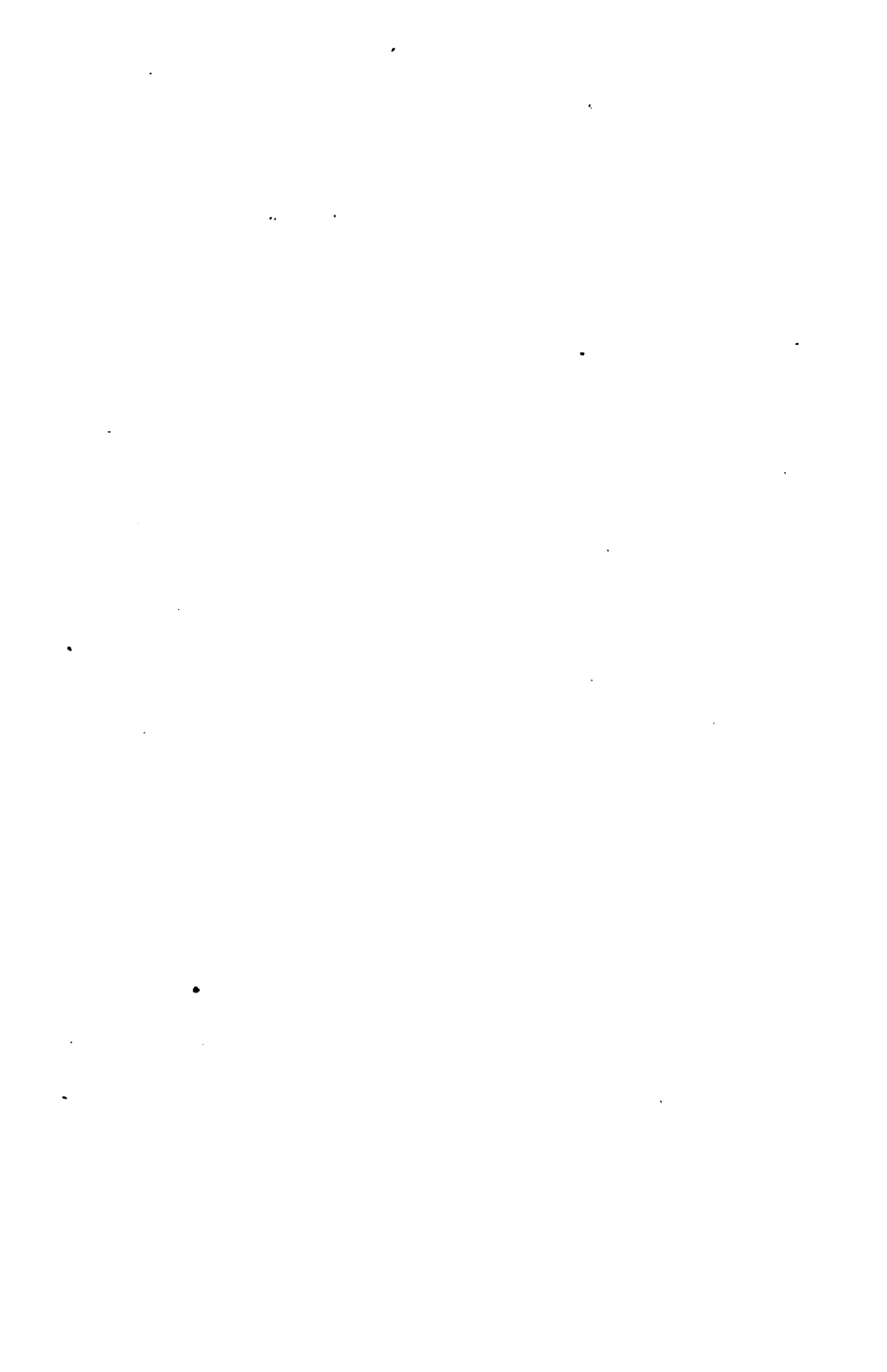
of St. Brieuc, the environs of which are thickly wooded, and very pretty. Wolves and deer used to be plentiful in the forests round, but the influx of English visitors from Dinan has naturally thinned the shooting. We often, however, saw wolves' feet, nailed to barn doors, which was circumstantial evidence of their presence at no very distant period. St. Brieuc owes its origin to a Welshman, who became a convert to Christianity while in Paris, and in 594 determined to attempt the conversion of the Armoricans. After but slight opposition he made good his entrance, and a city gradually sprung up around the monastery he erected. It was late when we reached the hotel, and first securing the *coupe* for the next diligence to Dinan, which started at ten that night, we began to think some dinner would be highly advisable. The five o'clock *table d'hôte* being over, there was some doubt about our being allowed anything till the seven o'clock repast, as the *chef de cuisine* was an important personage, not to be trifled with; so we sent down

a humble message, per *bonne*, that we should be glad of some refreshment, it was perfectly immaterial of what kind, if we might only be allowed it at once. But after making an excursion to the post-office, some distance off, in quest of letters, and finding on our return no signs of our anticipated repast, Lady Leslie went down to speak about it herself, and found the *bonne* had not even mentioned our request to the *chef*, who graciously assured my aunt that though it was out of his usual way, he would immediately cause a *petit dîner* to be served up, whereat we were proportionately grateful.

At ten we descended to the bureau, and found the diligence ready to start. This was a much larger conveyance than the Morlaix one—the windows were whole, and really free from mud. In small country diligences the *coupe* only means a seat beside the driver, so it is necessary to see the vehicle before securing places in it. The night was dark, and I gazed drearily out on the desolate waste we were traversing; the lamp casting red rays on solitary trees here and

there. We had been at least an hour on the road, and Nora was asleep with her head on my shoulder, when a jerk of the carriage, and a scream from my aunt, announced that something had happened, and there in front was a white horse lying quietly on the ground, and our steeds half over him looking into a cart, the driver of which was rousing himself from his slumbers. He had been asleep inside, and his cart, on the wrong side of the road, with no light in it, was of course charged and borne down by our stalwart animals. The *conducteur* got down to assist in raising the cart-horse, which seemed quite used to being knocked down, and took it easily till ordered to get up, which, after struggling vehemently, it at last accomplished without being unharnessed. We drove off, leaving the countryman to ruminate over his broken cart. It is marvellous so few accidents occur on roads where diligences, which generally go at a gallop, pass and repass day and night; for though by law every vehicle is ordered to carry a lamp after dusk, these pea-

sants always evade it by only lighting their lanterns when entering a town. We were often amused by watching the diligence horses, who would come out of their stables and range themselves in the traces with the greatest sagacity. However far they came, they generally commenced an indiscriminate fight as soon as the stage was finished. If the noise became alarming, the coachman would go to the stable door, scold, and remonstrate with them for a few seconds, and then walk away, leaving the tumult appeased. The poor horses are frequently dreadfully galled with their rope harness, which was of the most primitive description, and our drivers have often cut a promising young sapling out of the hedge, to manufacture some missing pin or bolt from its stem. Bretons often ill-use and overload their horses, but they manage them very well, and are never so happy as when driving. They talk the whole time to the horse, and call it alternately a lamb, a pig, a jewel, an ass, a drunken cow, a wooden horse, or a true Russian, which is their climax of everything bad. We





PONT DE LEHON, DINAN.

drove to the Hôtel de Bretagne, at Dinan (as the late bad weather had wearied our mother, and she had gone to await our return at Jersey), but very much preferred the Hôtel du Commerce. Any one wishing to stay in Dinan more than a day or two, would do well to procure rooms in the comfortable boarding-house, conducted by an English lady, where everything is arranged to suit the tastes of our countrymen. Dinan has long been a favourite resort of the English. Between two and three thousand of them pass through it every summer; and many find inducements to settle there—a Protestant church, good schools, lovely scenery, and a bracing climate, besides a medicinal spring in the environs, where during the season a band plays, and I have heard very good concerts and gay balls occasionally take place there. Carriages and donkeys may be procured *à discrétion*, and one of the prettiest excursions in the neighbourhood is to the ruins of Lehon, along the winding banks of the Rance, where chestnut trees slope down to the water's edge, and

groups of busy *blanchisseuses* enliven the scene. The grey old ruins of the abbey, almost hidden by luxuriant ivy, are reflected on the river's placid surface, surrounded by an orchard, and



ABBEY OF LEHON.

—strange mixture of calm decay and energetic life—part of the monastery has been converted

into a factory, where the busy hum of machinery resounds from morn till eve. A part of the abbey church has been roofed over, and is now used for regular service. It contains some paintings on wood, very well executed, considering



WINDOW AT LEHON.

their age. They represent attenuated monks and saints, and were taken from a Spanish

ship, wrecked on the coast. The abbey is said to have been built by Neomene, over the body of St. Magloire, which had been cleverly stolen from Jersey by the monks. Founded in the ninth century, it perished during the stormy days of the Revolution. On the brow of a neighbouring hill stand the ruined towers of the Château of Lehon, taken by our Henry II. in 1168, rebuilt and again destroyed in the fifteenth century. The Vicomte of Lehon, and Seigneur of Dinan were among the nobles who came over to England at the Norman invasion. Nobles seem always to have been plentiful in Brittany. The highest in rank were counts, then came vicomtes, next seigneurs or barons, and lastly the untitled "*noblesse*." Chevalier was a title that could not be inherited—it had to be won by gallant feats of arms, and those seigneurs who were not chevaliers were unable to lead their men to battle. In 1681 there were from five to six thousand houses and titles possessed by different Breton families. In a book entitled "Memoirs on the State of the

Nobility in Bretagne," written in that year, we find, "When nobles are engaged in commerce their noble blood sleeps, but when the derogatory works are over it revives—it is never lost but in death." Dinan seems to have been continually the scene of combats between French and English, sometimes one, sometimes the other remaining the masters of the field. Duguesclin is the great hero of the town, and his heart is embalmed, with that of his wife, in the church of St. Sauveur. Some historians trace his birthplace to the village of "La Motte Broons," but another, "Broons sur Vilaine," in the next department, equally claims the honour, which remains a subject of dispute. The Dinannais have tried to settle the matter by raising a small pillar on the site of the ruins of *their* Broons, stating it was the birthplace of the hero. It was at Dinan that his famous duel with Thomas de Cantorbery took place in 1359. The scene of that day's event is now planted with linden trees, called the Place Duguesclin, and forms a favourite promenade.

In the opposite direction to Lehon, on the other side of Dinan, stands the picturesque ruin of La Garaye, abounding in remembrances of good deeds done by the philanthropical Comte and Comtesse de la Garaye. These two excellent individuals studied medicine at Paris, and then retiring to their estate here, converted it into a hospital, and devoted their time and income to alleviating the wants and sufferings of the poor around them. The old story of the "Revolution" accounts for the defaced carvings and ruined front of this once lordly mansion.

Among other objects of interest may be mentioned the menhir of St. Samson, about twenty-seven feet in height, and a favourite spot for picnics and donkey-rides.

One more expedition should be taken, before bidding adieu to the fair valleys and verdant woods of Dinan; namely, to the Cross of the Saint-Esprit, standing on a rising ground, divided from the town by a valley. This cross can be seen at some distance; its long light shaft springs from a Gothic pedestal, and is surrounded by a

sculpture representing the Father supporting the dying Saviour, and some smaller figures grouped around. Some large buildings near, enclosed in high walls, belong to an order of *frères*, who have established a lunatic asylum, where the poor inmates are treated with real care and kindness.

The old church of St. Malo, almost hidden by the surrounding houses, is now undergoing considerable repairs, and when completed will be a magnificent structure. St. Sauveur, the next in importance, occupies an imposing situation close to the ramparts, and adds greatly to the effect of the town, when viewed from the aqueduct or the opposite height.

Combourg, four or five leagues off, was the home of Chateaubriand's youth, and would well repay a day spent in exploring its beauties, and re-tracing the scenery rendered familiar by the "*Mémoires d'outre-Tombe*." An aunt of Chateaubriand resides at Dinan—at least she was still there last year.

The town of Dol, nine leagues off, is a very

curious old place. It has a large unfinished cathedral of the thirteenth century, the interior much handsomer than the outside. From one of its towers you get a lovely panoramic view of the country, which is very pretty. The narrow, dirty, picturesque streets are full of quaint old gable-ends, and women with wonderful caps. There is a celebrated menhir at Carfautin, which has, with very bad taste, been cut into a round pillar, surmounted by a cross. Dol was founded in 550, by a Welshman, St. Samson, and had a very stormy ancient history, both ecclesiastical and secular. In 1079, Jehonens usurped the bishopric of Dol, pillaged the church for the benefit of his children, and held the see in spite of papal thunders. Our William the Conqueror besieged it; and peace was only restored by Constance, his daughter, marrying Duke Alain Fergent, in 1087. This Duke joined the first crusade. A curious old engraving of him in a Moorish robe and turban, may be seen in Tobineau's "*Histoire de Bretagne*." His second wife, Ermengarde, went with him to Syria, founded an abbey at

Sicar, near Jacob's Well, and returned to Bretagne in 1135.

There are three routes from which to choose between Dinan and St. Malo; one, entirely by land, passes through Chateauneuf, celebrated as being the deathplace of Duguesclin. He died of illness while besieging the town, which capitulated the day after his death, and the keys were laid on his coffin. Chateauneuf was also the scene, in 560, of a great battle, in which King Clotaire defeated his son Cramme, who had a fleet ready, and could have escaped by himself; but, in trying to save his wife and children, who were in a cabin near the field, he was taken prisoner. His father ordered him to be burnt, with his family; but the soldiers strangled him, and fired the place of refuge where were his wife and two young children, who all perished. The miserable Clotaire died within the year, of remorse.

If you prefer going by water, you perform the journey in a small steamer, which makes a daily trip down the Rance and back. The banks of the river are very varied and pretty. As we had

already tried both these routes, we took the third, going by diligence to Dinard, which is one of the quietest and prettiest of watering-places ; and thence by steamer, fifteen minutes' passage across, to St. Malo. There are unluckily no cabstands at St. Malo ; and though the rain poured in torrents, we had to face it in walking to the Hôtel de la Paix, as it would have taken an hour to send for a carriage.

The town is surrounded by strongly fortified walls and towers, and connected by a wide stretch of sand and road with St. Servan, the West End of St. Malo, few people caring to live in the latter place. The bishopric of St. Malo was enriched by donations from King Childebert, of lands in Normandy, and the islands adjoining, known as Augic, Sargic, and Vesargic.* St. Magloire, the first bishop, went over from England with his uncle St. Samson, and many other holy men, during the reign of Alain, 540. St. Malo, from being the abode of so many saints, became an asylum for criminals of all nations, who could

* Our Channel Islands.

not be arrested or punished within its precincts. It was at that time an island, surrounded by the sea at high tide, and only accessible at low water. In 1421, a fearful famine and plague ravaged the place, and the Duke was compelled, in consequence, to lower his taxes.

Several old writers relate that the nightly round was performed by a band of large "chiens anglais qui s'appellent dogues," which animals are especially ferocious at night; and, having patrolled the town, are turned outside the walls, so that none durst approach. This custom was continued till 1770, when it was abolished in consequence of the dogs having eaten up a naval officer. Jacques Cartier, the discoverer of Canada, Chateaubriand, and many other illustrious men, were born here. The Duchess Anne built a large castle just outside the town-gates, in defiance of the bishop and local authorities, who objected to being controlled and superintended by any power beyond their own.

Cancale, so well known by its celebrity for oysters, lies a few miles distant. Pagan fleets of Swedes and Norwegians landed here in 996, and

it was pillaged by the English in 1758. Fifteen hundred fishermen live here, and go out three times a week, during the oyster season, dredging. At other times the fish they catch, which is fine and abundant, is sent to London and Paris.

Next morning, bidding adieu to the shores of Brittany, we embarked for Jersey, in the "*Venus*" steamer, and nearly terminated this and all future voyages; for such a violent storm arose, that, as a Frenchman on board expressed it, "thousands of waves passed over the captain, as he kept his place on the deck." The tables, and everything in the cabin, were overturned, and I was flung off my sofa on to the floor. The little steamer could not make the harbour of St. Heliers, and had to run into St. Aubin's, where, after some difficulty and a thorough drenching, we succeeded in landing.

THOSE who would wish to see Brittany as she really is, must not look at her wild and barren plains, her bleak dreary mountains, her dark

and sombre forests, her stormy and rock-bound shores, and her lonely lovely valleys, with the hasty glance they cast on any other passing landscape, with the hard practical eye and fastidious tastes of modern travellers; they must think of her as the land that has been consecrated by the earliest feats of chivalry, perhaps the only spot in the modern world that has preserved in her legends untarnished the "eternal youth of phantasy." Here, it is not only "the spirit that haunts the last year's bowers," but the spirit of ages past, that looks you in the face. The traveller must not regard the melancholy Breton, alternately taciturn and eloquent, simply as an unlettered and morose peasant, but as a being cradled in superstition, endowed by nature and education with a vivid imagination, with a deep, true, poetical sense, with strong and gloomy religious views, to whom the "spirit-land" is an ever present, an ever living reality, and who indemnifies himself for his hard lot on earth by a constant reference to the future joys of heaven. The religious sentiment of these peasants is so completely a part of their nature,

that nothing can shake or alter their calm trusting faith. "I will throw down your steeples," said Jean St. André, to the *maire* of a village during the Revolution; "then you will have no more objects that can recall your old superstitions." "You will always be compelled to leave us the stars," replied the bold peasant, "and we can see them from a greater distance than our steeple." M. Souvestre tells us of the solemn manner in which Christmas time is celebrated in the parishes of Treguier. Separate bands of young men and maidens go through the country, singing carols at the foot of the cross beside the four roads. When darkness covers the valleys, you hear these religious hymns chanted by invisible choirs. The young men begin,—“What is there new on the earth that all the world is abroad in the streets? Why do the people go in bands toward the churches during the night, and what means this crowd who during the day are praying to God?” Then the voices of the young girls, sweeter, fresher and higher, reply,—“To-day is born the Messiah; it is to-day we must adore the

Saviour." The young men reply,—“ Why do we hear, day and night, prayers in the churches? Why do the priests say mass at midnight?” The girls respond again,—“ We must rejoice, for to-day is accomplished the mystery of the nativity.” Then both bands sing together,—“ This night renews the course of life; this night revives the son of Adam; this night fills our hearts with joy, and blots out the sin of Eve. This night gives us a Saviour full of holiness and charity; sing, because it is his *fête*. Sing from your hearts, Noël, Noël.” One can easily imagine the effect such songs must have on a sensitive and imaginative peasantry, heightened by all the effect that distance, darkness, and the solemnity of the occasion can lend it; and, as if to deepen these religious impressions, they have grand canticles, full of a passionate energy, some of which might terrify into madness the simple hearts that listen to them. Take, for example, these few verses: “ Hell! hell! do you know what that means, sinners? It is a furnace of roaring flame; a furnace beside which the fire of a closed forge, the fire that reddens the

basin of the kiln, is but a smoke. There never can you perceive any light! the fire burns on like a fever, without being seen. There hope never enters; the anger of God has closed the door. Fire over your heads, fire all around you. Are you hungry? eat of the fire; are you thirsty? drink of that river of sulphur and liquid flame. Eternity! think of this word, Christians; never ceasing to weep, never ceasing to die. For ever! it is a word larger than the sea, full of cries, of tears, and of rage. For ever! oh, thou art inflexible; thou art fearful."

After listening to words such as these, one cannot be surprised to hear of women fainting from terror, of men like Jôan, the fanatic preacher of Guilelan, who in a moment of religious phrensy cut off his left hand as an offering to the Lord who died for him; and of whole parishes where the illiterate peasantry live in a state of the most abject submission to their priests—who speak, they believe, with the voice of God himself. If the Beajer Briez (as the traveller in Brittany is termed in the vernacular) will keep these things

in remembrance as he gazes on the sun-burnt, toil-worn, quaintly-costumed sons and daughters of Bretagne, he will have a clearer insight into their real life, than can ever be attained by the mere casual observer.

APPENDIX.

NOTE A.

M. VILLEMARQUÉ says, after much research, he claims for the ancient Bretons (no matter of what branch) the invention of the legends of the Round Table. In the early ages, when the Armoricans of Galle and the Bretons of Albion had a national language, and an indigenous poetry of the same origin, the emigration of the islanders at the Saxon invasion rendered their resemblance even more complete with the men of the continent, and in the train of the emigrants, "the '*krote*' of the Bretons, as well as their name, their dialect, and their customs, crossed the Channel to come and wed itself with the harp of the Armoricans." The favour accorded to the minstrels who sang the prowess of Arthur at the court of the Plantagenets, was because these Breton singers proclaimed them as the legitimate heirs of the throne of Great Britain—hailed them with enthusiasm as the destroyers of the Anglo-Saxon tyranny, according to prophecies attributed to Merlin, announcing the coming of the Dukes of Normandy to

aid the emigrant Bretons in reconquering their country from the Saxons. These prophecies, flying from the coasts of Armorica to Wales and Cornwall, were as follows: "From Neustrie will come a people armed with glaive and lance, who will exact vengeance for the iniquities of the invaders. They will restore to their dwellings the ancient inhabitants, and conquer the strangers, who will bear the yoke of an eternal servitude, and with the hoe and the plough they will break up the earth. On that day the Welsh mountains will tremble for joy, the Armorican fountains will spout up, and the oaks of Cornwall will grow green again." Naturally, the Norman princes collected the Breton music and poetry, which lent to them the prestige of legitimacy.

This poetic movement, humbly commenced in the two Breagnes, has continued in a glorious manner through all countries where French is spoken. It was felt even in frozen Iceland, and the farthest Ind acknowledged its influence. Here M. Villemarqué (ignoring Albion altogether), in a burst of Gallic patriotism, declares, "France has never taken a step, she has never thought a thought, without agitating and astonishing the whole world."

The romance of Arthur has exercised an influence over literature from that time to our days. Dante, Chaucer, Ariosto, Tasso, Cervantes, Spencer, Shakespeare, Ronsard, down to La Fontaine, and their millions of readers, all owe a debt of gratitude to the Round Table.

NOTE B.

THE following lines were written by a lady who resided for some time in Morbihan. The incident they describe was related to her by the priestly actor in the scene, who appeared solemnly to believe in it himself, either from having constantly repeated the story, or from some original delusion. She was frequently allowed to look at the outside of his wonderful black volume, but was never permitted to open it.

THE PRIEST AND HIS BOOK.

The spire shone bright in the soft moonlight,
The tower was high and the church was white,
'Twas Christmas eve, 'twas a solemn fast
For sins to come and sins that were past ;
But the clock struck twelve, and a dismal cloud
Enwapt the scene in a misty shroud.
The villagers all were gone to their rest,
And the wind it blew a gale from the west.
 Pit pat went the drops
 Of the rain, as it flops
Down from the trees and the small house-tops.
While drearily whistles the wind through the trees,
And the howl of the wolf is borne on the breeze,
And owls that shriek in their nightly freak
Are welcoming loudly the Christmas week.
But near to the church is a little abode,
And to it there winds a narrow road,
There are two modest chimneys and one tiny door,
And within is a savour of priestly lore.
Who is it that winds through the little lane,
Without a stirrup, without a rein ?

Away ! away ! on a Breton bay,
Catch him, catch him, catch him who may.
At the little white house he at length pulls up ;
Is it for bit, or is it for sup ?
Is it for something short, or does he
Feel sick, or sad, or only sorry ?
But look we within the little house door,
I see a face, and I hear a snore,
And the face is round and the snore is loud,
And the owner has just been blowing a cloud.

“Awake ! awake !

A soul's at stake !

Minutes are short, and time is flying !
Delay not a moment, the lady's dying.”
Slowly he rises up from his chair,
And he dons his priestly hat with care,
While he gathers his petticoats round his knees
And bids his housekeeper mind the keys.
But who is the lady that's taken so ill
She cannot swallow her draughts and pill,
But can only groan through the livelong day,
And beg that the priest will come and pray ?
Alas ! her religion's been none of the best,
Full rarely she's fasted, and never confest ;
In short, her behaviour's been rather so, so,
And she always said *Yes*, when she ought to say *No*.

Thro' mud and thro' mire,

Thro' brake and thro' briar,

On sped the priest on his little grey mare,
And she never so much as turn'd a hair.

“He's there, I declare !”

Said the little soubrette—

“I hope your reverence isn't wet.”

Then behind the door he tarries a space,
To learn the pros and cons of the case,
And then mounts the stair with a heavy tread
And sits him down beside the bed.
A skull-cap covers his shaven crown,
And his long locks fall his neck adown ;

Around his form is a silken band,
 And a little black book is in his hand.
 He asks the lady if she's better,
 And remarks that the night could not be wetter;
 Then remembering his duty is to console,
 He proceeds to inquire after her soul.

The words are said—

When from the bed
 Arises a form all black and red,
 With a forked tongue and a foot all cleft,
 And a tail that wagged from right to left;
 A vicious look was in his eye,
 And the soubrette shriek'd and said, "Oh my!"
 While the priest for a moment was taken aback,
 And could only exclaim, "Good lack! good lack!"
 But bold father Migeote was not to be done,
 A soul was yet to be lost or won—
 He calls on St. Dunstan, St. Giles, and St. Anne,
 And invokes St. Michael, and Athelstane.

But all in vain;

With tweak and with pain,

Again and again

The devil asserts his right to possess
 The soul of the lady who won't confess.
 But all on a sudden the father bethought him
 Of the little black book that he carried about him,
 'Twas a book which only a priest might see,
 And not allow'd to the laity;
 But one of its uses was, I know,
 To send off the devil when he's *de trop*.
 So the book right stoutly the father hurl'd
 At the head of his foe, and away he whirl'd

In a flash and a blaze,

And a sort of a haze,

While the lady was left in a great amaze:
 But after a while she received absolution,
 And took a dose of quinine solution:
 While the soubrette she put the bed to rights,
 And there's left but a smell of Promethean lights,

Which causes the father to hold his nose, '
While slowly he leaves the room on his toes.
But whether the lady lived or not,
Or sinn'd again and the father forgot,
Or whether Old Nick who cut his stick
For fear of St. Albert ever came back
In his devilish costume of red and black,
I cannot tell—but great is the glory
The father has gain'd by his share of the story ;
And after this happen'd, for many a day,
Whenever the devil is mention'd, they say
That the villagers always are ready to shout
For the jolly old father who bow'd him out.

M. H.

THE END.

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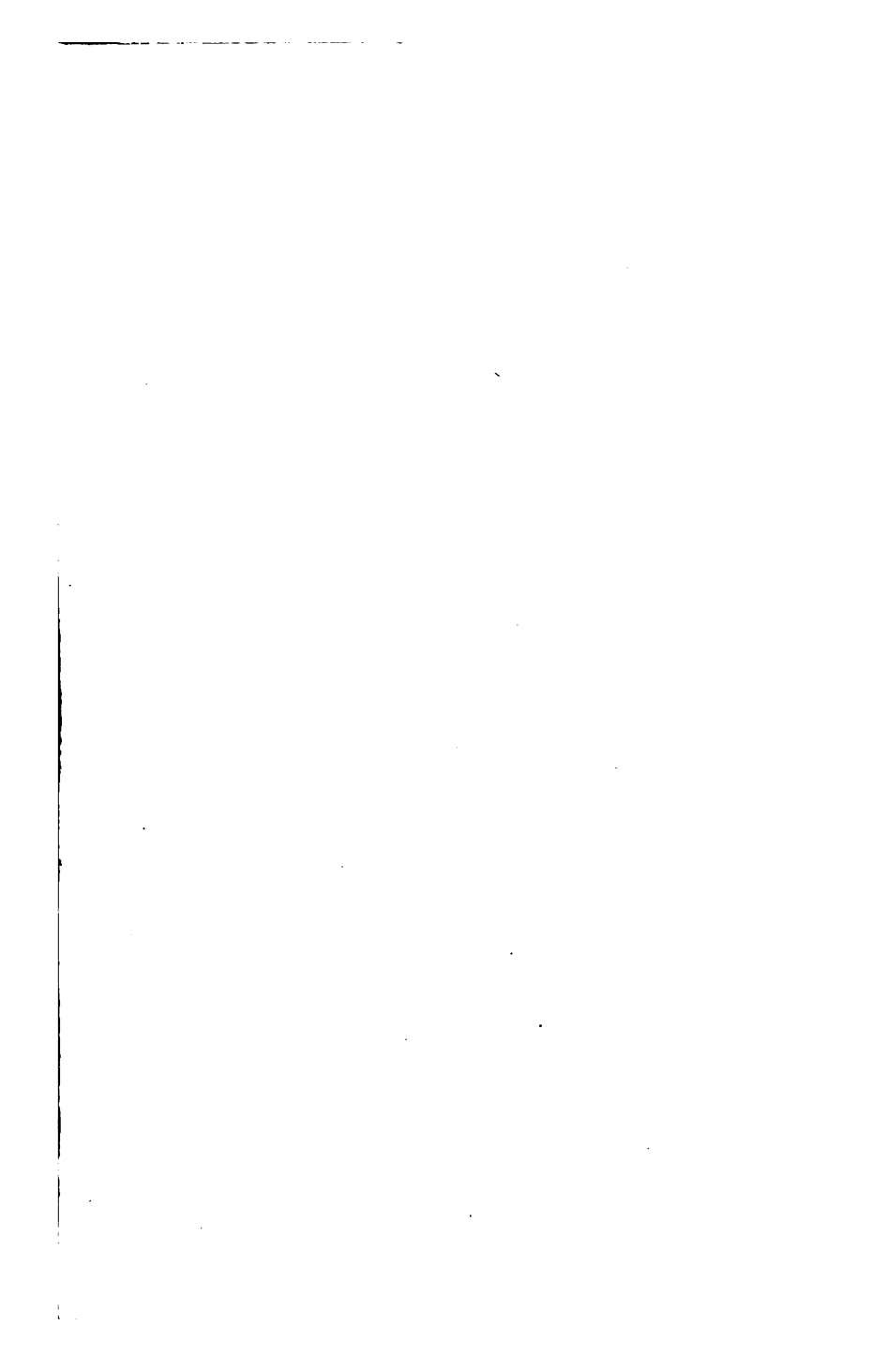
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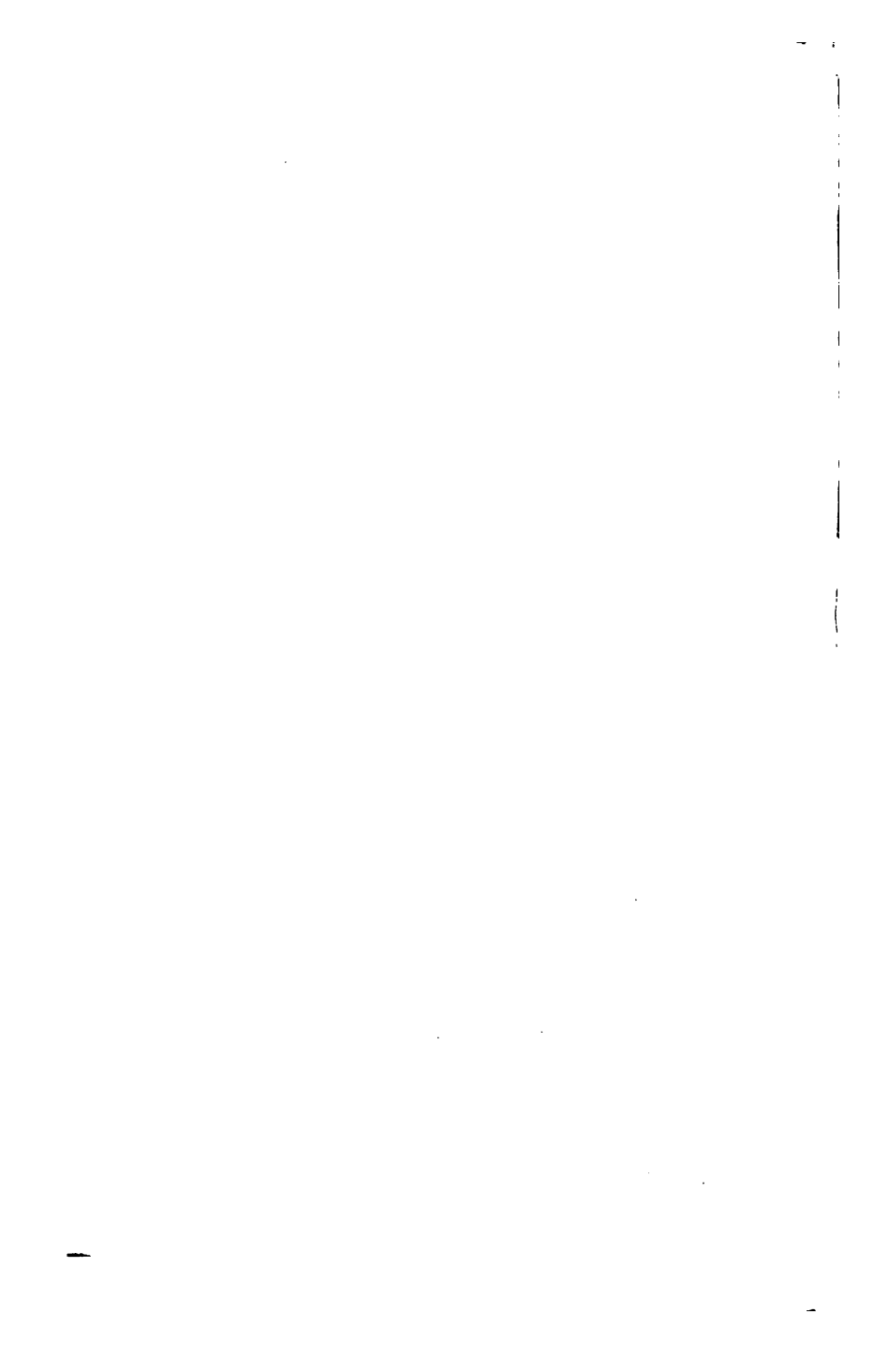
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